



DR. RICHARD SIBBES.

THIS eminent puritan divine was born at, or near Sudbury, in the year 1579. After laying a foundation of classical learning at a school, in his native neighbourhood, he was sent to Cambridge, and admitted a student at St. John's College, in 1595: here he prosecuted his studies with great diligence, took both the degrees in arts with singular reputation, and was chosen a fellow of his college. Some time after he had proceeded master of arts, he entered into orders, and being early distinguished by that seriousness and piety which marked his character through the whole of the subsequent part of his life, he was chosen lecturer of Trinity church, Cambridge, the living of which he afterwards held for the two years immediately preceding his death. He soon became very popular as a preacher, his lectures being numerous attended both by the scholars of the university, and the inhabitants of the town. In consequence of the reputation he obtained here, he was appointed preacher to the honourable society of Grays' Inn, in 1618. His services in this situation, where he had for his auditors, with the learned members of that society, many noblemen and other persons of the first distinction, were received with general approbation. In the year 1625, he was chosen master of Catherine Hall, Cambridge, an appointment which, notwithstanding his puritan principles,



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THE SAINTS CORDIALLS,

WHEREIN

We have particularly handled,

*The Saints safety and hiding-place,
The Saints Assurance,
Christs sufferings for mans sin,
The Saints Refreshing,
Salvation applyed,
The Churches Visitation.
CHRIST is best,*

*The Life of FAITH,
The Art of self-judging and
humbling,
The difficulty of Salvation,
The danger of back-sliding,
The ungodlies misery,
With other material things.*

DELIVERED IN

SUNDRY SERMONS.

AT

Graies-Inne, in the City of London, and at
Cambridge.

By RICHARD SIBBS, D. D. Late Master of Katherine-Hall
in Cambridge, and Preacher at Graies-Inne.

Richard Sibbs
PSAL. 73. 26.

*My strength and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my
heart, and my portion for ever.*

M. S.
LONDON,

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DELIVERED IN

SUNDAY SERMONS

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THE
TITLES, TEXTS,
AND
DOCTRINES
OF
The severall SERMONS.

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FINIS.

JOSEPH
REFORMATION.

Laid open in foure SERMONS.

- viz. { 1. THE TENDER HEART.
2. THE ART OF SELF-HUMBLING.
3. THE ART OF MOURNING.
4. THE SAINTS REFRESHING.

Wherein is shewed the *Turnings* and *Windings*
Of the Soul in this great work of Reformation : and how the stout
heart may so be brought low, as to be made humble, melting,
and compassionately mournful : even to the comfort
of a sweet Assurance.



By R. Sibbs, D. D. Master of Katherine Hall in Cambridge, and Preacher
of Grayes Inne LONDON.

The Third Edition.

ESAY 57. 15.

*For thus saith the high and lofty One, that inhabiteth Eternity, whose
Name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy Place : with him also that is
of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to
revive the heart of the contrite ones.*

LONDON,

Printed for Henry Cripps, at his Shop in Popes-head Alley,

1658.

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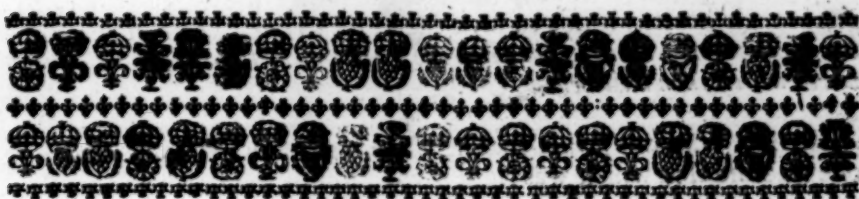
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T H E TENDER HEART.

S E R M. I.

2 Chron. 34. 26.

*And as for the King of Judah, who sent you to enquire of the Lord, so shall ye say unto him : Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, concerning the words which thou hast heard :
Because thine heart was tender, &c.*



These words are a part of the message which the Prophetesse of *Huldah* sent to good King *Josiah* : for as the message was concerning him and his people, so his answer from her is exact, both for himself and them. That part which concerned his people, is set down in the three fore-going Verses : that which belongs unto himself, is contained in the words now read unto you ; *But to the King of Judah, &c.* The Preface to her message we see strengthened with authority from God, *Thus saith the Lord God of Israel.* Which words, carry in them the greater force and power from the Majesty of the Author : for if words spoken from a King, carry authority, how much more then, the word of the Lord of Hosts, the King of Kings ? Here is her wisdom therefore, that she layes aside her own authority, and speakes in the Name of the Lord.

We see that waters of the same colour have not the same nature and effect : for hot waters are of the same colour with plain ordinary waters, yet more effectual : so the words of a man comming from a man, may seem at first to be the same with others : yet notwithstanding the words of God comming from the Spirit of God, carry a more wonderful

derful excellency in them, even to the hearts of Kings: They binde Kings, though they labour to shake them off: they are Arrowes to pierce their hearts; if not to save them, yet to damn them. Therefore he speaks to the King; *Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, concerning the words which thou hast heard, &c.*

Here we read of *Josiah*, that he was a man of an upright heart, and one who did that which was right in the sight of the Lord; and answerably we finde the Lord to deal with him: for he desirous to know the issue of a fearful Judgement threatned against him and his people, sendeth to *Huldah*, a Prophetesse of the Lord to be certified therein: whereupon, he receiveth a full and perfect answer of the Lords determination, both touching himself and his people, that they being forewarned, might be fore-armed; and by their timely conversion to the Lord, might procure the averſion of ſo heavy wrath: He in uprightness ſends to enquire, and the Lord returns him a full and upright answer. Whence we may learn,

Doct. 1. That God doth graciously ſit Prophets for perſons, and his word to a people that are upright in their hearts: where there is a true deſire to know the will of God, there God will give men ſincere Prophets, that ſhall answer them exactly; not according to their own luſts, but for their good. *Josiah* was an holy man, who, out of a gracious diſpoſition, deſirous to be informed from God, what ſhould become of him and his people, ſends to the Prophetesse *Huldah*. It was Gods mercy, that they ſhould deal faithfully with him. This is Gods mercy to thoſe that are true hearted; He will give them teachers ſuitable to their deſires; but thoſe that are falſe-hearted, ſhall have ſuitable teachers, who ſhall inſtruct them according to their luſts. If they be like *Ahab*, they ſhall have four hundred falſe Prophets to teach falſhood, to pleaſe their luſts: but if they be *Davids*, they ſhall have *Nathans*: if they be *Josiahs*, they ſhall have *Huldahs* and *Jeremiahs*. Indeed *Herod* may have a *John Baptiſt*; but what will he do with him in the end, when he doth come to croſſe him in his ſin? Then off goes his head.

1 King. 22. 6.
Mark 6. 27.

Uſe.

This ſhould teach us to labour for ſincerity, to have our hearts upright towards God; and then he will ſend us men of a direct and right ſpirit, that ſhall teach us according to his own heart: but if we be falſe hearted, God will give us teachers that ſhall teach us, not according to his will, but to pleaſe our own. We ſhall light upon belly-gods, & Epicures, & ſhall fall into the hands of Priests & Jeſuites; where ſuch are, there are the Judgements of God upon the people, becauſe they do not deſire to know the will of God in truth. We ſee, *Ezek. 14. 3, 4.* the people deſired to have a ſtumbling-block for their iniquity; they were naught, and would have Idols; therefore they deſired ſtumbling-blocks: they would have falſe Prophets, that ſo they might go to hell with ſome authority: well, ſaith God, they ſhall have ſtumbling-blocks: *for thus ſaith the Lord of Iſrael*, to every man that ſetteth up his Idols in his heart, & putteth the ſtumbling-block of his iniquity before his

his face, and commeth to the Prophet to inquire, *I the Lord will answer him that commeth, according to the multitude of his Idols: according to his own false heart, and not according to good.* What brought the greatest judgement upon the world (next to hell itself) I meane *Antichrist*: the terriblest judgement of all, that hath drawn so many souls to hell, but the wickedness of the place and people, and his own ambition? The sins of the people gave life to him: they could not indure the Word of God, or plain dealing; they thought it a simple thing. They must have more sacrifices, more ceremonies, and a more glorious government: they would not be content with Christs government which he left them, but were weary of this: therefore he being gone to Heaven, they must have a *Pope* to go before them, and lead them to hell. Therefore let men never excuse those sins; for certainly, God saw a great deal of evil in them, and therefore gave them up to the judgement of *Antichrist*: but let us magnifie Gods mercies, that hath not so given us up. Thus we see how graciously God deales with a true hearted King: he sends him a true answer of his message.

Verse 27. *Because thine heart was tender, &c.*

Now here comes a comfortable message to good *Josiah*, that he should be taken away, and not see the miseries that should befall his people: the cause whereof is here set down, *because thy heart was tender, and thou didst humble thy self before God.* Which cause is double.

1. *Inward.*

2. *Outward.*

1. The *inward*, is the tenderness of his heart, and humbling of himself. 2. And then the *outward* expression of it is set down in a double act:

1. *Rending of clothes.*

2. *Weeping.*

Because thou hast rent thy clothes, and wept before me: After which comes the promise, *I have also heard thee, saith the Lord: Behold, I will gather thee to thy Fathers; and thou shalt be put in thy grave in peace, and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place, and upon the inhabitants of the same.*

I will first remove one doubt, before I come to the tenderness of *Josiah*'s heart: What, may some say, *Is there any thing in man, that can cause God to do him good?* No, one thing is the cause of another, but all come from the first cause: so *tenderness of heart* may be some cause of removal of judgement; but God is the cause of both: for they all come from the first cause, which is God. So that *these words do rather contain an order, than a cause*: for God hath set down this order in things, that where there is a broken heart, there shall be a freedom from judgment:

not that tenderness of heart deserves any thing at Gods hand, (as the Papists gather) but because God hath decreed it so, that where tenderness of heart is, there Mercy shall follow: as here there was a tender heart in *Josiah*, therefore mercy did follow. Gods promises are made conditionally; not that the condition on our part deserves any thing at Gods hand: but when God hath given the condition, he gives the thing promised: so that this is an order which God hath set down, that where there is Grace, Mercy shall follow. For where God intends to do any good, he first works in them a gracious disposition: after which, he looks upon his own work, as upon a lovely object, and so doth give them other blessings: God crowns grace with grace.

By heart is not meant the inward material and fleshly part of the body; but that spiritual part, the soul and affections thereof. In that it is said to be *tender* or melting, it is a borrowed and metaphorical phrase. Now in a *tender heart*, these three properties concur.

1. It is sensible.
2. It is plyable.
3. It is yeelding.

The qualities
of a tender
heart.

First, a *tender heart is alwayes a sensible heart*; it hath life, and therefore sense; there is no living creature but hath life, and sense to preserve that life. So a tender heart is sensible of any grievance: for *tenderness doth presuppose life*, because nothing that hath not life is tender. Some senses are not altogether necessary for the being of a living creature; as *bearing and seeing*: but *sensibleness* is needful to the being of every living creature. It is a sign of life in a Christian, when he is sensible of inconveniences. Therefore God hath planted such affections in man, as may preserve the life of man; as *Feare and Love*. *Feare* is that which makes a man avoid many dangers: therefore God hath given us feare, to cause us make our peace with him in time, that we may be freed from inconveniences; yea, from that greatest of inconveniences, *hell fire*.

Again, a *tender heart is plyable and yeelding*. Now that is said to be yielding and plyable, which yields to the touch of any thing that is put to it; and doth not stand out, as a stone that rebounds back when it is thrown against a wall: so that is said to be tender, which hath life, and sense, and is plyable. As wax is yielding and plyable to the disposition of him that works it, and is apt to receive any impression that is applied to it. In a tender heart there is no resistance, but it yields presently to every truth, and hath a plyableness and a fitness to receive any impression, and to execute any performance; a fit temper indeed for a heart wrought on by the Spirit. *God must first make us fit, and then use us to work*. As a wheel must first be made round, and then turned round: so the heart must be first altered, & then used in a renewed way. A tender heart so soon as the word is spoken, yields to it; it quakes at threatenings, obeys precepts, melts at promises, and the promises sweeten the heart. In all duties concerning God, and all offices of love to men, a tender

tender heart is thus qualified. But hardness of heart is quite opposite: Hardness of heart. for (as things dead and insensible) it will not yield to the touch, but returns back whatsoever is cast upon it: Such a heart may be broken in pieces, but it will not receive any impression: as a stone may be broken, but will not be pliable, but rebound back again. A hard heart is indeed like wax to the devil, but like a stone to God or goodness. It is not yielding, but resists and repels all that is good: and therefore compared in the Scripture to the *Adamant* stone: Sometimes it is called a frozen heart, because it is unplyable to any thing: you may break it in pieces, but it is unframable for any service, for any impression: it will not be wrought upon. But on the contrary, a melting and tender heart is sensible, yielding, and fit for any service both to God and man. Thus we see plainly what a tender heart is. The point from hence is,

That it is a supernatural disposition of a true Childe of God to have a tender, soft, and a melting heart: I say that a disposition of a true child of God, and the frame of soul of such an one, to be tender, apprehensive, and serviceable, is a supernatural disposition: and of necessity, it must be so, because naturally the heart is of another temper; a stony heart. All by nature have stony hearts, in respect of spiritual goodness. There may be a tenderness in regard of natural things; but in regard of grace, the heart is stony, and beats back all that is put to it: say what you will to a hard heart, it will never yield. A hammer will do no good to a stone: it may break it in pieces, but not draw it to any form: so to a stony heart, all the threatnings in the world will do no good. You may break it in pieces, but never work upon it: it must be the Almighty power of God. There is nothing in the world so hard as the heart of man: the very creatures will yield obedience to God; as flies, and lice, to destroy *Pharaoh*: but *Pharaoh* himself was so hard hearted, that after ten plagues, he was ten times the more hardened: Therefore, *if a man have not a melting heart, he is diverted from his proper object:* because God hath placed affections in us, to be raised presently upon suitable objects. When any object is offered in the word of God (if our hearts were not corrupted) we would have correspondent affections: at judgements we would tremble, at the word of threatnings quake, at promises we would with faith believe, and at mercies be comforted; at directions we would be pliable and yielding; but by nature our hearts are hard. God may threaten, and promise, and direct, and yet we insensible all the while. Well, all *Josiahs* and all that are gracious, of necessity must have soft hearts, therefore I will shew you,

- { 1. How a tender heart is wrought.
- { 2. How it may be preserved and maintained.
- { 3. How it may be discerned from the contrary.

First, *A tender heart is made tender by him that made it:* for no creature in the world can soften and turn the heart: onely God must alter and change it: for we are all by nature earthly, dead, and hard. Hence How a tender heart is wrought: it

it that he doth make that gracious promise, *Ezek. 11. 19.* I will give them one heart, and put a new spirit within their bowels, and I will take away the stony hearts out of their bodies, and give them a heart of flesh, that is, a living, sensible heart.

Quest.

But doth God immediately make the heart tender, and change it, without any help by meanes?

Sol.

I answer, meanes do not make the heart tender, but God through the use of meanes, softens it by his word: Gods word is a hammer to break, and as fire to melt the hardned heart, *Jer. 23. 9.* And thus it works, first, when God doth shew to the heart our cursed estate, and opens to the same the true dangers of the soul, which it is in by nature, and custom of sin; and sets before it the terrors of the last day, and present danger of Judgement: When the Spirit of God, by the Word doth convince the Soul to be in a damned estate, dead, born under wrath, and an heir of damnation; that by nature God frowns, and hell is ready to swallow us up; when the soul is thus convinced, then the heart begins to be astonished, and cries out, *Men and Brethren, what shall I do?* when the Word is thus preached with particular application, it doth good. For a man may hear the Word of God generally, and yet have no broken heart: but when a *Peter* comes and saith, *you have crucified the Lord of life:* and when a *Nathan* comes to *David*, and saith, *thou art the man:* then comes the heart to be broken and confounded.

Acts 2. 37.

But it is not enough to have the heart broken; for a pot may be broken in pieces, and yet be good for nothing; so may a heart be through terrors, and sense of judgement; and yet not be like wax, plyable: therefore it must be melting; for which cause, when God by his judgements hath cast down the heart; then comes the Spirit of God, revtaling the comfort of the word; then the gracious mercy of God in Christ is manifested, *that there is mercy with God, that he may be feared.* This being laid open (to the quick) to a dejected soul, hence it comes to be melted and tender; for the apprehension of Judgement is onely a preparing work, which doth break the heart, and prepare it for tenderness.

Again, *Tenderness of heart is wrought by an apprehension of tenderness and love in Christ:* a soft heart is made soft by the blood of Christ. Many say, that an *Adamant* cannot be melted with fire, but by bloud; I cannot tell whether this be true or no: but I am sure nothing will melt the hard heart of man, but the bloud of Christ, the passion of our blessed Saviour. When a man considers of the love that God hath shewed him in sending of his Son, and doing such great things as he hath done, in giving of Christ to satisfy his justice, in setting us free from hell, Satan and death. The consideration of this, with the perswasion that we have interest in the same, melts the heart, and makes it become tender. And this must needs be so, because that with the preaching of the Gospel unto broken hearted sinners cast down, there always goes the Spirit of God, which works an application of the Gospel.

Christ is the first gift to the Church: when God hath given Christ, then comes the Spirit, & works in the heart a gracious acceptance of mercy

mercy offered; the Spirit works an assurance of the love and mercy of God: now love and mercy felt, work upon the tender heart a reflective love to God again. *What, hath the great God of Heaven and Earth sent Christ into the World for me? humbled himself to the death of the Crosse for me? and he hath let Angels alone, and left many thousands in the world to choose me? and hath he sent his Ministers to reveal unto me this assurance of the love and mercy of God?* This consideration cannot but work love to God again: for love is a kinde of fire which melts the heart; so that when our souls are perswaded that God loves us from everlasting, then we reflect our love to him again; and then our heart sayes to God, *Speak Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* The soul is pliable for doing, for suffering, for any thing God will have it; then, *Speak Lord, for thy servant heareth.*

And when the heart is thus wrought upon, and made tender by the Spirit; then afterward in the proceeding of our lives, many things will work tenderness: as *the works of God, his judgements, the World and Sacraments*, when they are made effectual by the Spirit of God, work tenderness: *the promises of God* also make the heart tender, as *Rom. 12. 1.* I beseech you, Brethren, by the mercies of God, offer up your souls and bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God; there is no such like argument to perswade men to tenderness of heart, as to propound the love and mercy of God. And *so the fear of any judgement will work tenderness*: This made *Josiah's* heart to melt, but yet this did not work first upon him: for he having a tender heart before, and being sure of Gods love; when he heard the judgement that should come upon his people, (out of love to God, and to his people) his heart melted; not so much for fear of judgement, but to think that God should be provoked by the sins of his people. And thus we have seen how tenderness of heart is wrought. Now I come to shew the meanes, how we may preserve this tenderness of heart, because it is a disposition of Gods Children: how then shall we preserve our selves in such a perpetual temper? The way to preserve a tender heart, is,

First, *to be under the meanes, whereby Gods Spirit will work*: for it is he by his Spirit that works upon the heart, and doth preserve tenderness in us; and he will work only by his own meanes; all the devices in the world will not work upon the heart: therefore let us be under the meanes that may preserve tenderness; and hear what Gods Word sayes of our estate by nature, of the wrath and justice of God, and of the judgement that will come upon all the world; This made *Paul* to cry (though he knew that he was the child of God, and free from the Law,) *Therefore (saith he) knowing the terror of the Law, we admonish you.*

And then, *go into the house of mourning, and present before your selves the miserable and forlorn estate of the Church of God abroad*: It was this that broke *Nehemiah's* heart, when he heard that the Jewes were in great affliction & reproach, that the wall of the City was broken down, and the gates thereof burnt with fire; he sat down and wept, and mourned certain dayes, fasted and prayed before the God of heaven. This made this

How to preserve a tender heart.

Nehem. 1. 4.

this good man *Nehemiah* to mourn, so that all the Princes of the Court could not comfort him. This also made *Moses* his heart to melt, when he looked on his Brethrens affliction in *Egypt*: so we might keep our hearts tender, if we did but set before our eyes, the pittiful estate of Gods Church abroad, and that we may come to be in such an estate our selves ere long.

3. And if thou wilt preserve tenderness of heart, *labour for a legal and Evangelical Faith*; we must believe, that all the threatnings of Gods vengeance against the wicked shall come to passe: faith doth make these things present before our eyes; for it is the nature of faith to set things absent, present before us. What makes the Malefactor to tremble and be cast down, but when he sees that he is ready for to die, is going to the place of execution, and sees death look him in the face? so faith setting the day of Judgement before our eyes, will make us to tremble. Therefore *Paul* doth so often adjure *Timothy*, by the coming of the Lord Jesus to Judgement: and *Enoch* set the day of Judgement before him, at the beginning of the world, as we may see in *Jude*: he had a faith, that set things to come as present, and made him to walk with God. So if we had an Evangelical faith to believe the goodness of God, pardon from him, and everlasting life; this would preserve tenderness of heart.

2 Tim. 4. 1.
Jude 4.

4. Again, *good company will preserve tenderness of heart*; sorting our selves with those that are tender hearted: for the soul will reason thus; doth such a one make conscience of swearing, profaning the Sabbath? and doth he mourn for the miseries of the Church? then what a hard piece of dead flesh am I, that have nothing in me?

5. Again, if thou wouldst preserve tenderness of heart, by all means take heed of the least sin against conscience: for the least sin in this kinde, makes way for hardness of heart. Sins that are committed against conscience, do darken the understanding, dead the affection, and take away life; so that one hath not the least strength to withstand the least temptation. And it so comes to passe by Gods just judgement: for when men will live in sins against conscience, he takes away his Spirit, and gives up the heart from one degree of hardness to another. For the heart at first being tender, will endure nothing; but the least sin will trouble it. As water, when it begins to freeze, will not endure any thing, no not so much as the weight of a pin upon it; but after a while, will bear the weight of a Cart. Even so at the beginning, the heart being tender, trembles at the least sin, and will not bear with any one; but when it once gives way to sins against conscience, it becomes so frozen, that it can endure any sin; and so becomes more and more hard. Men are so obdurate, having once made a breach in their own hearts by sins against conscience, that they can endure to commit any sin; and therefore God gives them up from one degree of hardness to another: what will not men do, whom God hath given up to hardness of heart?

6. Again, if thou wilt preserve tenderness of heart, Take heed of spiritual

tuall drunkennesse : that is, *that thou be not drunke with an immoderate use of the creatures*; of setting thy love too much upon outward things: for what saith the Prophet? Wine and Women take away the heart; that is, the immoderate use of any earthly thing, takes away spiritual sense: for the more sensible the soule is of outward things, the lesse it is of spiritual. For as the outward takes away the inward heat, so the love of one thing abates the love of another: the setting of too much love upon earthly things, takes away the sense of better things, and hardens the heart. When the heart is filled with the pleasures and profits of this life, it is not sensible of any judgement that hangs over the head: As in the old World, they eat and drank, they married and gave in marriage, they bought, and sold, while the flood came upon them, and swept all away. *When a man sets his love upon the creature, the very strength of his soul is lost.* Therefore in the Scripture, God joynes prayer and fasting both together; that when he would have our hearts raised up to heaven, we should have all use of earthly things taken away. Therefore when we are to go about spiritual duties, we must cut our selves short in the use of the creatures. Talk of Religion to a carnal man, whose senses are lost with love of earthly things, he hath no eare for that: his sense is quite lost he hath no relish or favour of any thing that is good. Talk to a covetous man that hath his soul set upon things of this life, he hath no relish of any thing else: his heart is already so hardened to get honour and wealth, (though it be to the ruine of others) that he cares not how hard it become: therefore we are bidden to take heed, that our hearts be not overcome with drunkennes, and the cares of this life, for these will make a man to be insensible of spiritual things.

Mat. 24. 37.

Mat. 17. 21.

Luke 21. 34.

Again, if thou wilt preserve tenderness of heart, *take heed of hypocrisie*; for it causeth swelling, and pride makes the heart to contemn others that be not like unto us; they blesse themselves that they live thus and thus, they think themselves better than any other, and if they hear the Minister reprove them for sin, they will shift it off, and say, Oh, this belongeth not to me, but to such a carnal man, and to such a wicked person: as the *Scribes and Pharises*, who were vile hypocrites, yet they were the cause of all mischief, and more hard-hearted than *Pilate* an heathen man: for he would have delivered Christ, but they would not. So take a *Romish* hypocrite, that can proudly complement it at every word, with inticing speech; yet you shall have him more hard-hearted than *Turk* or *Jew*: for full of cruelty and blood is the whore of *Babylon*. Therefore if thou wilt have tenderness of heart, take heed of hypocrisie.

7.

Luke 25. 17.

Again, *Above all things, take heed of great sins, which will harden the heart*; for little sins do many times not dead the heart, but stir up the conscience; but great sins do stonde and dull a man: As a prick of a pinne will make a man to start, but a heavy blow maketh a man for to be dead for the present. Therefore take heed of great sins. Thus it was with *David*; he sinned in numbring of the people, and for this his heart

8.

heart smote him : but when he came to the great and devouring sin of *Driah* and *Bathsheba* ; this was a great blow that struck him and laid him for dead, till *Nathan* came and revived him. For when men fall into great sins, their hearts are so hardned, that they go on from sin to sin ; Let us therefore be watchful over our own hearts to preserve tenderness. The Eye being a tender part, and soonest hurt, how watchfull is man by nature over that, that it take no hurt ? so the heart being a tender thing, let us preserve it by all watchfulness, to keep blowes from off it : It is a terrible thing to keep a wound of some great sin upon the conscience, for it makes a way for a new breach ; because when the conscience once begins to be hardned with some great sinne, then there is no stop, but we run on to commit sin with all greedinesse.

9. Lastly, if thou wilt preserve tenderness of heart, *Consider the miserable estate of hardnesse of heart ; such an one that hath had an heart*, is next to hell it selfe, to the estate of a damned Spirit : a most terrible estate. A hard heart is neither melted with promises, nor broken with threatnings ; he hath no bowels of pitty to men, or love to God : he forgets all judgement for things past, and looks for none to come. When the soul is in this case, it is fit for nothing but for sin and the devil : whereas a tender hearted man is fit for all good. Let God threaten, he trembles and quakes : let God promise, his heart melts, and rejoyceth, and it makes him even to break forth into thanksgiving : let God command, he will perform all : he is fit for any good thing to God and man. But when a mans heart is hardned by hypocrisie, covetousness, or custom in sin, he hath no pitty, no compassion : Let God command, threaten, or promise, yet the heart is never a whit moved. This is a terrible estate of soul.

Now to speak a little to young men, that are like to this holy man *Josiah* ; surely his tenderness had some advantage from his yeares : Let those that are young by all meanes labour to keep tenderness of heart ; for if young persons be good, there is a sweet communion between God & them, before the heart be pestered with the cares of the world. God delights much in the prayers of young men, because they come not from so polluted a soul, hardned with the practices of this world. Let such therefore as are young, take advantage of it, to repent in time of their sins, and let them not put it off unto their old dayes. While we are young, let us not neglect natural tenderness ; although we cannot bring our selves under the compasse of Gods Kingdom by it, yet shall we get our hearts the sooner to be tender. In our youth therefore let us not neglect this good opportunity, as good *Josiah* did not, when he was but young : Therefore let us repent of every sin betimes, and acquaint our selves of those that are good, as it is said, *Heb. 3. 13. Let us provoke one another daily, while it is called to day, lest any of you be hardned through the deceitfulness of sin.* Let us use all meanes to keep our hearts tender ; oh, it is a blessed estate ; we are fit to live, when our hearts are tender ; fit to die, fit to receive any thing from God, fit for duties of honesty to men, for any service to God. But when we have

have lost sense and feeling, it must be the Almighty power of God; that must recover us again, and not one amongst an hundred comes to good : therefore labour to preserve a tender, soft and melting heart.

Now ere I proceed, give me leave to answer some cases of conscience, as,

First, *Whether the Children of God, may be subject to this hardness of heart, opposed to this tenderness?* Quest. 1.

Secondly, *Whether a Christian may be more sensible of outward things, than of spiritual, as the love of God, or his own sin, and the like?*

To the first I answer, that the Child of God may be hard-hearted: Sol. 1. he may have some degrees of hardness of heart in him. For a Christian is a compounded creature : he hath not only bodie and soul, but flesh and spirit : he is but in part renewed ; and therefore having in him both flesh and spirit, he is subject to hardness of heart ; and it is clear, that it may be so. Examples shew, that Gods Children are not alwaies alike sensible of the wrath of God, and of his mercie : they do not yield so to his commands as they should : But what is the reason that God doth suffer his Children to fall into this hardness of heart ? there is something in us, that makes him give us up unto it ; for we are no longer soft than he works upon us. *But what doth move him to leave us in this disposition?* I answer, he doth it for correction of former negligences, for sins of omission ; especiallie when they neglect some meanes of grace, whereby their hearts might be kept tender : it is for want of stirring up of Gods grace in them, for want of an high esteem of grace bestowed upon them, want of care of their companie, for not associating themselves with such as are tender hearted : and from hence it comes, that God suffers his Children to fall into hardness of heart.

But now from hence ariseth another question; *How may a man know his heart, from the heart of a Reprobate, seeing that Gods Children may have hardness of heart?* Quest.

I answer, That the heart of a man that is a verie Reprobate, is tallie, whollie, and finallie hardned; and it is joyned with security and insensibleness ; it is joyned with obstinacy, and with contempt of the meanes ; but the Child of God hath not total, and final hardness of heart ; but hath a sensibleness of it, he feeleth and seeth it. Total hardness doth feel nothing, but a Christian that hath hardness of heart, doth feel that he hath it ; as a man that hath the stone in his bladder, feeles and knowes that he hath a stone. A hard hearted man feeles nothing ; but he that hath but onlie hardness of heart, doth feel : for there is difference between hardness of heart, and a hard heart ; for the Child of God may have hardness of heart, but not a hard heart. Now, I say, a Child of God that hath hardness of heart, is sensible of his hardness, and performs the actions of a sensible soul: he useth some meanes for the softning of it, for the sense thereof is grievous to him above all other crosses ; and whiles he is under it, he thinks that all is not with him, as it should be: therefore he complains

Isa. 63. 17. of it above all other afflictions, which makes him crie to God, as we may see, *Isa. 63. 17.* Why hast thou hardned our hearts from thy feare?

Objest.

Sol.

How God is
said to harden
the heart.

But some may demand how God doth harden? I answer, the cause is first from our own selves; but he hardens foure waies: first, *Privately*, by with-holding and withdrawing his melting and softning power. For as the Sun causeth darkness by withdrawing his light and warming power: so God withdrawing that melting power, whereby we should be softned, it cannot be but that we must needs be hardned.

Secondly, *Negatively*, by denying of grace; by taking away from us his graces, which are not natural in us: thus God doth to those whom he doth absolutely harden; he takes away that which they have, and so they become worse than they of themselves were by nature. When men walk unworthy of the Gospel, God takes away verie rational life from them; and gives them up to hardness of heart, that they run on in such courses, as that they are their own enemies, and bring upon themselves ruine.

Thirdly, And as God hardens by *Privation* and *Negation*; so in the third place *He hardens by Tradition*: by giving us up to the Devil, to be vexed by his troubles, to harden us: It is a fearful judgement. When we take a course to grieve the Spirit of God, the Spirit will take a course to grieve us: he will give us up to Satan, to blinde and to harden us. So that though God doth not work, as the Author effectually in this hardning, yet (as a just Judge) he doth by giving us up to Sathan, and the natural lusts of our own hearts, which are worse than all the Devils in hell.

Fourthly and lastly, he doth harden *Objectively*, by propounding good Objects, which meeting with a wicked heart, make it more hard, as *Esa. 6. 10.* It is said, Harden these peoples hearts: how? by preaching of the Word: A good object, if it lights upon a bad soul, hardens the heart: for they that are not bettered by religion, under the meanes, are so much the worse by their use. So we see God cannot be impeached with the hardning of our hearts, because all the cause is from our selves: for whether he hardens by *Privation*, *Negation*, *Tradition*, or by propounding good Objects, it is all from our selves; and likewise we have seen, that Gods Children may have hardness of heart in some measure; but yet it differs from a Reprobate, because they see and feel it, grieve for it, and complain of it to God.

Quest.

The second question is, *But whether may a Child of God be more sensible of outward joyes, or crosses, than of spiritual things?* for this makes many think they have not tender hearts, because they are more sensible of outward things than of spiritual.

Answ.

I answer, *It is not alwayes alike with them*; for Gods Children are still complaining of something; of their carelesnes in good duties, of their want of strength against corruption: they go mourning when they have made God to bring them down upon their knees for their hardness of heart: but there is an intercourse in the Children of God, between the flesh and the Spirit: they are partly flesh, & partly spirit; therefore many times, for a while, when the flesh prevails, there may be a sudden joy, and

and a sudden sorrow ; which may be greater than spiritual joy , or spiritual sorrow : but yet it is not continual. *But spiritual sorrow, grief for sin, though it be not so vehement as (for the sudden) outward sorrow is, yet it is more constant: grief for sin is continual:* whereas outward sorrow is but upon a sudden, though it seem to be more violent.

And again, *In regard of their valuing, and prizing of earthly things,* there may be a sudden sorrow : for a Child of God may upon a sudden over-prize outward things, and esteem them at too high a rate : but yet after that, valuing things by good advice, they prize spiritual things, far beyond outward : and therefore their sorrow and joy, is more for spiritual things, because it is constant. This I speak not to cherish any neglect in any Christian ; but for comfort to such as are troubled for it : therefore let such know , that God will not break the bruised Reed, nor quench the smoking Flax. If they have but a desire, and by conscionable use of meanes, do shew their desire to be true ; they shall have it at last : for Christ doth continue to make intercession for us : and *if there were no weakness in us, what need Christ continue to make peace for us ?* for peace is made for those that fall out : therefore if there were no falling out between God and us, what need Christ to continue to make intercession for us ? for these reasons, we see a Child of God, for the present, may be more sensible of outward things, than of spiritual.

But here another question may be asked. *How shall we know that we have sensibleness, and pliability, or not ?* I answer, easily, by applying of the soul unto objects ; as,

*Ans.
Quest.*

1. To God.
2. To his Word.
3. To his works.
4. To man.

We may try our tenderness and pliability of heart , these four ways. 1. *To God. As it is tender from God, so it is tender for God ;* for the three persons of the Trinity : He that hath a tender heart, cannot endure to dishonour God himself, or to hear others dishonour him, either by his own sins, or by others : he cannot indure to hear Gods Name blasphemed : so that they have a tender heart, who when they see Christ in his Religion to be wronged, cannot chuse but be affected with it. So again, a man hath a tender heart , when he yields to the motions of the holy Ghost ; when the Spirit moves, and he yields, this shewes there is a tender heart. But a hard heart bears back all, and (as a stone to the hammer) will not yield to any motion of Gods Spirit.

*How to know
that we have
sensibleness
and pliability.*

Now in the second place, to come downward ; *A tender heart is sensible in regard of the Word of God ;* as first, at the threatnings, a true tender heart will tremble, as *Isa. 62. 2.* To him will I look ; even to him that is of a contrite and broken spirit, and trembleth at my words. A man that hath a tender heart, will tremble at the signes of the anger of God : Shall the Lion roare, and the beasts of the forrest not be afraid?

Amos 3, 4.

yes, they will stand still and tremble at the roaring of the Lion; but much more will a tender heart tremble, when God roares and threatens vengeance; a tender heart will tremble, when it heares of the terrors of the Lord, at the day of Judgement; as *Paul* did, *Now knowing the terrors of the Lord, we perswade men*: it forced him to be faithful in his office. This use the Apostle *Peter* would have us make of it, *2Pet. 3. 11.* That seeing all these things must be dissolved, what manner of persons ought we to be in holy conversation and godliness?

2 Cor. 5. 15.

Isa. 6. 8.
Psal. 27. 8.

And so for the promises in the Word: *The heart is tender, when the Word of God doth rejoyce a man above all things*: How can the heart but melt at Gods promises? for they are the sweetest things that can be: therefore when a tender heart heares Gods promises, it makes him to melt, and be sensible of them. Again, a tender heart will be plyable to any direction in the Word. To Gods call it will answer, here I am; Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? as *Esaiah*, when he had once a tender heart; then, *Send me Lord*: so *David* to Gods command, *Seek ye my face*; answers, *Thy face Lord will I seek*: there is a gracious Echo of the soul to God, in whatsoever he saith in his Word. And thus a true tender heart doth yield to the Word of God, and is fit to run on any errand.

Thirdly, *By applying it to the works of God*: for a tender heart quakes when it doth see the judgement of God abroad upon others; it hastens to make his peace with God, and to meet him by repentance. So again, a tender heart rejoyceth at the mercy of God: for it doth see something in it, better than the thing it self; and that is the love of God, from which it doth proceed.

Fourthly, *A man may know his heart to be tender and sensible, in regard of the estate of others, whether they be good or bad*: if they be wicked, he hath a tender heart for them: as *David*, *Psal. 119. 136.* Mine eyes gush out with Rivers of water, because men keep not thy Law: so *Paul* saith, There are many that walk inordinately, of whom I have told you before, and now tell you weeping, &c. So Christ was sensible of the misery of *Jerusalem*, wept for it, and a little while after, shed his own blood for it; thus had he a tender heart. But when Christ looked to Gods decree, he saith, Father, I thank thee, Lord of Heaven and Earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and Noble, and hast revealed them unto babes. And so likewise for those that are good; in giving, and forgiving; in giving, they give not only the thing, but they give their hearts and affections with it: and so in forgiving, they apprehend Christs love in forgiving them; therefore they forgive others. So for works, will God have a tender heart to do any thing? it will do it: if he will have it mourn, it will mourn; if to rejoyce, it will rejoyce: it is fit for every good work. By these marks we may know, whether we have tender marks or no.

Phil. 3. 18.

Mat. 23. 37.

Mat. 11. 25.

But to apply this, how is this affection of *Josiah* in the hearts of men in these dayes? how many have melting hearts, when they hear God blasphemed, and the Religion of Christ wronged? how few are there, that

that yield to the motions of the Spirit? we may take up a wonderful complaint of the hardness of mens hearts in these dayes, who never tremble at the Word of God: neither his promise, nor threatnings, nor commands will melt their hearts: but this is certain, that they which are not better under Religion, by the meanes of grace, are much the worse. And how sensible are we of the Churches miseries? for a tender heart is sensible of the miseries of the Church, as being members of the same Body, whereof Christ is the Head. But men now adayes, are so far from melting hearts, that they want natural affection; as *Paul* foretels of such in the later times; they have lesse bowels of pitty in them (when they hear how it goes with the Church abroad) than very Pagans and Heathens: this shewes they have no tender hearts; that they are not knit to Christ by faith, who is the head; nor to the Church, the body, in love. How is thy heart affected to men, when they commit any sin against God? as Idolaters, swearers, drunkards, lyars, and the like. Is it mercy to let those go on in their sins towards hell? no, this is cruelty; but mercy is to be shewed unto them, in restraining men from their wicked courses. Therefore do not think thou shewest mercy unto them, by letting them alone in sin; but exhort and instruct them: coldness and deadness is a spiritual disease in these dayes: but surely they that have the Spirit of God warming their hearts, are sensible of their own good and ill, and of the good and ill of the time. Well, if you will know you have a tender heart, look to God, look to his Word, to his Works, to your selves, and others: and so you shall know whether you have tender hearts or not.

But here may be another question asked. *How shall men recover themselves, when they are subject to this hardness, deadness, and insensibility?* If after examination, a man finde himself to be thus; how shall he recover himself out of this estate?

Quest.

I answer: First, *As when things are cold, we bring them to the fire to heat and melt:* so bring we our cold hearts to the fire of the love of Christ: consider we of our sins against Christ, and of Christs love towards us: dwell upon this meditation. Think what great love Christ hath shewed unto us, and how little we have deserved: and this will make our hearts to melt, and be as plyable as Wax before the Sun.

Ans.

How to recover our selves from deadness

Secondly, *If thou wilt have this tender & melting heart, then use the meanes: be alwayes under the Sun-shine of the Gospel.* Be under Gods Sun-shine, that he may melt thy heart: be constant in good meanes, & help one another. We must provoke one another daily, lest any be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. Physicians love not to give Physick to themselves: so a man is not alwayes fit to help himself when he is not right; but good Company is fit to do it. Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us, said the two Disciples, holding communion each with other at *Emmans*: for then Christ comes and makes a third, joyns with them, and so makes their hearts burn within them. So Christ saith, Where two or three are met together in his Name, he is in the midst of them. Now they were under the promise, therefore he affords

Heb. 3. 13.

Luk. 24. 32.

2 Sam. 12.7.

his presence : where two hold communion together, there Christ will make a third. Therefore let us use the help of others, seeing *David* could not recover himself being a Prophet, but he must have a *Nathan* to help him. Therefore if we would recover our selves from hard and insensible hearts, let us use the help one of another.

Thirdly, *We must with boldness and reverence challenge the Covenant of grace* : for this is the Covenant that God hath made with us, to give us tender hearts, hearts of flesh, as *Ezek. 11. 19.* I will give them one heart, and put a new spirit within their bowels, I will take away the stony hearts out of their bodies, and I will give them a heart of flesh : Now seeing this is a Covenant God hath made, to give us fleshly hearts, and to take away our stony ; let us challenge him with his promise, and go to him by prayer : intreat him to give thee a fleshly heart ; go to him, wait his time, for that is the best time ; therefore wait, though he do not hear at first. These are the means to bring tenderness of heart.

Incourage-
ments to seek
for a tender
heart.

Now that ye may be stirred up to this duty, (namely, to get a soft and tender heart,) mark here first, what an excellent thing a tender heart is ; *God hath promised to dwell in such an heart* ; and is it not an excellent thing, to have God dwell in our hearts, as he hath promised, *Esay 57. 15.* For thus saith he that is high and excellent, he that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is the Holy One ; I will dwell in the high and holy place, and with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to give life to them that are of a contrite heart. So *Isa. 66. 2.* To him will I look, even to him that is poor, and contrite in spirit, and doth tremble at my words. Now God having promised to dwell where there is a soft heart, and no hardness, no Rocks to keep him out ; can God come into a heart without a blessing ? can he be separated from goodness, which is goodness it self ? when the heart therefore is pliable, and thus tender, there is an immediate communion between the soul and God : and can that heart be miserable, that hath communion with God ? surely no.

Secondly, *Consider, that this doth fit a man for the end, for which he was created* : a man is never fit for that end for which he was made, but when he hath a tender heart : and what are we redeemed for, but that we should serve God ? and who is fit to be put in the service of God, but he that hath beg'd a tender heart of God ?

Thirdly, to stir you up to labour for this, *Consider ; that a tender heart is fit for any blessedness* : it is capable of any beatitude : what makes a man blessed in any thing, but a tender heart ? this will make a man to hear the Word, to read, to shew mercies to others ; Blessed are the poor in spirit, saith Christ, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. A tender heart is blessed, because that only heareth Gods Word, and doth it : and it is alwayes a merciful heart, and therefore blessed.

Again, *Consider the wretched estate of a heart contrary, that is not tender, and will not yield.* O what a wonderful hardness would the heart of man grow to, if we do not follow it with the means to soften it : what a fearful thing was it, to see what strange things fel out at *Christs* death,

what

what darknes there was, what thunders and lightnings? the vail of the Temple rent, the Sun was turned into darknes, the graves opened, *Mat. 27. 45.* and the dead did rise; yet notwithstanding, none of these would make ^{51.} the hypocritical Pharisees to tremble, but they mocked at it, although it made the very heathen man confess it the work of God. For a ceremonial hypocrite is more hard than a *Turk*, *Jew*, or *Pagan*; All the judgements of God upon *Pharaoh*, were not so great as hardness of heart. The Papists after they have been at their superstitious devotion, are fittest for Powder-plots and Treasons, because their hearts are so much the more hardned. What fearful things may a man come to, if he give way to hardness of heart? he may come to an estate like the Devil; yea, worse than *Judas*: for he had some sensibleness of his sin: he confessed he had sinned in betraying the innocent blood. But many of these Hypocrites have no sensibleness at all, which is a fearful thing. *Elies* Children harkened not to the voice of their Father, because that the Lord had a purpose to destroy them: So it is in this case, a shrewd sign that God will destroy those that are so insensible, that nothing will work upon them. But these hypocrites shall be sensible one day, when they shall with they were as unsensible, as in their life-time they were: but it will be an unfruitful repentance, to repent in hell: for there a man shall get no benefit by his repentance, seeing there they cannot shake off the execution of Gods judgement, as they did shake off the threatnings of his judgements here. Well, to this fearful end, before it be long, must every one that hath a hard heart come, unless they repent. Therefore let every one be perswaded, to labour for a tender, plyable, yielding, and sensible heart here, else we shall have it hereafter against our wills, when it will do us no good; for then hypocrites shall be sensible against their wills, though they would not be sensible in this life.

And thus I have done with the first inward cause in *Josiah*, that moved God so to respect him, namely, *tenderness of heart.*

THE

THE



THE ART OF SELF-HUMBLING.

S E R M. II.

2 Chron. 34. 27.

Because thine heart was tender; [and thou didst humble thy selfe before God,] when thou heardest his words against this place; and against the Inhabitants thereof, and humbledst thy selfe before me, and didst rend thy Clothes, and weep before me, &c.



Of tenderness of heart, the first inward cause in *Josiah*, which moved God to pitty him, so as he should not be an eye witness of the fearful calamities to come upon his Land and people; is largely spoke in the former Sermon: wherein is also shewed how it is wrought, preserved, discerned, recovered when it is lost; what encouragements we have to seek and labour for it, with some other things which I will not here repeat, but fall directly upon that which followes, [*And thou didst humble thy selfe before God.*] In which words we have set down the second inward cause in *Josiah*, that moved God to shew mercy unto him; the humbling of himself; *And thou didst humble thy selfe before God.* Tenderness of heart and humbling a mans self, go both together: for things that are hard, will not yield nor bow; a great Iron Barre will not bow; a hard stony heart will not yield. Now therefore humbling of our selves, (the making of us as low as the ground it self) is added unto *tenderness*; for the soul being once *tender* and melting, is fit to be humbled; yea, cares not how low it be abased, so mercy may follow.

For

For the better unfolding of the words, we will consider:

1. *The person that did humble himself; Josiah, a King, a great man.*
2. *Humiliation it self, and the qualities of it; and humbledst thy self before God: which argued the sincerity of it.*
3. *The occasion of it, when thou heardest the words against this place, and against the Inhabitants thereof.*
4. *The outward expression of it, in weeping and renting his clothes: which we will handle in their place.*

First, for the *Person*: Thou didst humble thy self, *Josiah* a King, who was tenderly brought up, and highly advanced; a thing which makes the work so much the more commendable; whence we learn,
Doct. 1. That it is a disposition, not unbefitting Kings to humble themselves before God.

For howsoever they are gods downward, to those that are under them; yet if they look upward, what are Kings? the greater light hides the lesser: what are all the Inhabitants of the Earth in his sight, but as a drop of a Bucket, as dust upon the ballance, of no moment? I have said you are gods, but you shall die like men: for howsoever the Saints of God differ from other men, in regard of their use, and the inscription God hath set upon them; yet they are of the same stuffe, dust as others are. And so Kings, though in civil respects they differ from other men, yet are they of the small metal, and shall end in death, all their glory must lie in the dust.

*Esay 40. 15.
Psalm 82. 6, 7.*

Heb. 11. 29.

Therefore it is not unbefitting Kings, to humble themselves before God, seeing they have to deal with him, who is a consuming fire; before whom the very Angels cover their faces. I say it is no shame for the greatest Monarch of the Earth to abase himself, when he hath to do with God; yea, Kings of all other persons, ought most to humble themselves; to shew their thankfulness to God, who hath raised them from their Brethren, to be heads of his people. And considering the indowments which Kings usually have, they are bound to humble themselves, as also in regard of the authority and power which God hath put into their hands, (saying) *By me Kings reign*. But usually we see, from the beginning of the world, that Kings forget God: where there is not grace above nature, there Kings will not stoop to Christ: but so far as it agrees with their pleasure and will, so far shall Christ be served, and no farther. But yet God hath alwayes raised up some nursing fathers and mothers, (as he hath done to us, for which we ought to bless God) who have, and do make conscience of this mentioned duty, so well befitting Christian Princes, as in sundry other respects, so also in this, *That therein they might be exemplary to the people*; for no doubt, but *Josiah* did this also, that his people might not think it a shame for them to humble themselves before God, when as he their King tender in yeares, and subject to no earthly man, did before them in his own person prostrate himself in the humblest manner before the great God of Heaven and Earth.

As

As that oyntment poured upon *Aarons* head, fell from his head, to ^{Psal. 133. 2.} the skirts, and so spread it self to the rest of the parts, (even to his feet;) so a good example in a King, descends down to the lowest subjects, as the Rain from the Mountains into the vallies: Therefore a King should first begin to humble himself. Kings are called Fathers to their Subjects, because they should bear a loving and holy affection to their people: that when any thing troubles the subjects, they should be affected with it: Governours are not to have a distinct good from their subjects, but the welfare of the subjects should be the glory of their head. Therefore *Josiah* took the judgements threatned as his own: howsoever, his estate was nothing unto theirs.

It is said moreover, *Thou didst humble thy self*: He was both the *Agent*, and the *Patient*: the *worker*, and the *Object* of his work: it came from him, and ended in him: Humiliation is a reflected Action: *Josiah* humbled himself. And certainly, this is that true humiliation, the humbling of our selves: for it is no thank for a man to be humbled by God, as *Pharaoh* was: for God can humble and pull down the proudest that do oppose his Church: God by this, gets himself glory: but here is the glory of a Christian, that he hath got grace from God to humble himself: which humbling is, from our own judgement, and upon discerning of good grounds, to bring our affections to stoop unto God; to humble our selves; many are humbled that are not humble: many are cast down, that have proud hearts still, as *Pharaoh* had. It is said,

Thou humbledst thy self.

Then we learn, *That the Actions of Grace are reflected actions*; they ^{Doct. 2.} begin from a mans self, and end in a mans self; yet we must not exclude the Spirit of God; for he doth not say, thou from thy self, didst humble thy self; but *thou didst humble thy self*. We have grace from God to humble our selves; so that the Spirit of God doth work upon us as, upon fit subjects, in which grace doth work: though such works be the works of God, yet they are said to be ours, because God doth work them in us, and by us: we are said to humble our selves, because we are temples wherein he works; seeing he useth the parts of our soul, as the understanding, the will; and the affections in the work. Therefore it is foolish for the Papists to say, good works be our own, as from our selves; no, good works (say we) are ours, as effects of the Spirit in us. But for the further expression of this humbling of our selves before God, we will consider,

1. *The kinds and degrees of it.*
2. *Some directions, how we may humble our selves.*
3. *The motives to move us to it.*
4. *The notes whereby it may be known.*

First, for the *nature* and *kinds* of it, we must know, that humiliation is either.

1. *Inward, in the minde first of all, and then in the affections: or,*
2. *Outward, in expression of words, and likewise in carriage.*

To

1.
The kinds
and degrees
of humilia-
tion.

To begin with the first; *inward humiliation* in the minde, in regard of judgement and knowledge, is,

When our understandings are convinced, that we are, as we are: when we are not high minded, but when we judge meanly, and basely of our selves, both in regard of our beginning, and dependencie upon God; having all from him, both life, motion, and being: and also in regard of our end, what we shall be ere long: all *glory* shall end in the *dust*: all *Honour* in the *Grave*, and all riches in poverty. And withall, true humiliation is also *in regard of spiritual respects*: when we judge aright, how base and vile we are, in regard of our natural corruption: that we are by nature, not only guilty of *Adams* sin, but that we have besides that, wrapt our selves in a thousand more guilts, by our sinful course of life: and that we have nothing of our own, no not power to do the least good thing: when we look upon any vile person, we may see our own Image: so that if God had not been gracious unto us, we should have been as bad as they. In a word, inward conviction of our natural frailty and miserie, in regard of the filthie and foul stain of sin in our nature and actions, and of the many guilts of spiritual and temporal plagues in this life, and that which is to come, is that inward humiliation in the *judgement* or *understanding*.

Again, *inward humiliation, besides spiritual conviction, is when there are affections of humiliation*; and what be those? *shame, sorrow, fear,* and such like penal afflictive affections. For upon a right conviction of the understanding, the soul comes to be stricken with shame, that we are in such a case as we are: especially, when we consider Gods goodness to us, and our dealing with him; This will breed shame, and abasement, as it did in *Daniel*. *Shame and sorrow ever follow sin, first or last*; as the Apostle demands, *Rom. 6. 21*. What fruit had ye then in those things, whereof ye are now ashamed? after conviction of judgement, there is alwayes *shame*: And likewise there is sorrow and grief; for God hath made the inward faculties of the soul so, that upon the apprehension of the understanding, the heart comes to be stricken through with grief, which works upon our souls. Therefore we are said in Scripture, to afflict our selves, that is, when we set our selves upon meditation of our deserts; Hereupon, we cannot but be affected inwardly, for these sorrows are as so many daggers, to pierce through the heart.

The third penal affection, is, *fear and trembling before Gods judgements, and his threatnings*: A fear of the Majestie of God, whom we have offended, which is able to send us to hell, if his mercies were not beyond our deserts; but his mercie it is, that we are not consumed: a fear of this great God, is a part of this inward humiliation. So we see what inward humiliation is: First, *a conviction of the judgement*; & then it proceeds to *inward afflictive affections*, as *grief, shame, fear*, which when upon good ground, & fit objects they are wrought in us, by the holy Ghost, they are parts of *inward humiliation*. But as for the wicked they drown themselves in their profanities, because they would not be ashamed, nor fear, nor grieve for them. But this makes way for terrible shame,

shame, sorrow, and fear afterwards; for those that will not shame, grieve, and fear here, shall be ashamed before God and his Angels, at the day of Judgement, and shall be tormented in hell for ever.

Secondly, his *outward humiliation* is expressed and manifested in words, in outward behaviour and carriage. The words which he used, are not here set down: but certainly, *Josiah* did speak words, when he humbled himself. It was not a dumb shew, but done with his outward expression, and his inward affection. This is evident by those words of the Text, *I have heard thee also, saith the Lord*: without doubt therefore he did speak something. But because true sorrow cannot speak distinctly, (for a broken soul can speak but broken words) therefore his words are not here set down, but yet God heard them well enough. And indeed, so it is sometimes, that the grief for the affliction may be stronger than the faculty of speech, so that a man cannot speak for grief. As a Heathen man (by light of nature) did weep and grieve for his friends; but when his Child came to be killed before him, he stood like a stone, because his sorrow was so great, that it exceeded all expression. So humiliation may so exceed, that it cannot be expressed in words: as *David* himself, when he was told of his sins by *Nathan*, did not expresse all his sorrow, but saith, *I have sinned*: yet afterwards, he makes the 51 *Psalm*, a composed speech for supply: a fit pattern for an humble and broken soul. So doubtlesse, there was outward expression of words in *Josiah*, although they be not here set down. This speech, which is a part of humiliation, is called a confession of our sins to God: with it should be joyned hatred, and grief afflictive; as also a *Deprecation* and desire that God would remove the judgement, which we have deserved by our sins: and likewise a *Justification of God*, in what he hath laid, or may lay upon us. Lord, thou art righteous and just in all thy judgements: shame and confusion belongeth unto me: my sins have deserved, that thou shouldst poure down thy vengeance upon me: it is thy great mercy, that I am not consumed. The good Thief upon the Crosse, justified God, saying, we are here justly for our deserts; but this man doth suffer wrongfully. *Justification and self-condemnation, go with humiliation*; this is the outward expression in words: Now the *outward humiliation in respect of his carriage*, is here directly set down in two acts: *1. Rending of Clothes*, and *2. Weeping*.

But of these I shall speak afterwards when I come at them. Thus we have seen the degrees and kindes of humiliation,

Seeing it is such a necessary qualification, (for humiliation is a fundamental grace, that gives strength to all other graces), seeing (I say) it is such a necessary temper of a holy gracious man to humble, *how may we come to humble our selves as we should do?* I answer, Let us take these directions.

First, *get poor spirits*; that is, spirits to see the wants in our selves, and in the creature; the emptiness of all earthly things without Gods favour; the unfitness of our selves, and of the creature at the day of judgement: for what the Wise man saith of riches, may be truly said of all other things under the Sun: they avail not in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivereth from death.

Outward humiliation.

Luke 23. 41.

How we may come to humble our selves.

Prov. 11. 4.

Josiah was not poor, in respect of the world, for he was a King; but he was poor in spirit, because he saw an emptiness in himself: he knew his Kingdom could not shield him from Gods Judgement, if he were once angry.

2. Let us consider *our original*; from whence came we? from the Earth, from nothing. *Whither go we?* to the Earth, to nothing: and in respect of spiritual things, we have nothing: we are not able to do any thing of our selves, no not so much as to think a good thought.

3. Likewise, *consider we the guilt of our sins*; what do we deserve? Hell and damnation, to have our portion with hypocrites, in that lake that burneth with fire and brimstone.

Let us have before our eyes, the Picture of old *Adam*, our sinful nature; how we are drawn away by every object; how ready to be proud of any thing, how unable to resist the least sin, how ready to be cast down under every affliction; that we cannot rejoyce in any blessing, that we have no strength of our selves to perform any good, or suffer ill; in a word, how that we carry a nature about us, indisposed to good, and prone to all evil. This consideration humbled *Paul*, and made him to cry out, (when no other afflictions could move him, (O miserable man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death? by this meanes we come to be poor in spirit.

Rom. 7. 24.

The second meanes.

2. If we could have humble spirits, *let us bring our selves into the presence of our great God*; set our selves in his presence, and consider of his *Attributes*, his works of justice abroad in the world, and open our selves in particular.

Consider his *Wisdom*, *Holiness*, *Power* and *Strength*, with our own; it will make us abhorre our selves; and repent in dust and ashes. Let us bring our selves into Gods presence, be under the meanes, under his word, that there we may see our selves ript up, and see what we are.

Job 42. 6.

As *Job*, when he brought himself into Gods presence, said, *I abhorre my self and repent in dust and ashes*: *Job* thought himself some body before, but when *God* comes to examine him, and upon examination, found that he could not give a reason of the creature; much lesse of the Lords afflicting his Children; then he saith, *I abhorre my self*: so *Abraham*, the more he talked with *God*, the more he did see himself but dust and ashes: this is the language of the holy men in Scripture,

1 Cor. 15. 9.

Mat. 8. 8.

when they have to deal, or think of *God*, I am not worthy, sayes *John Baptist*, *John* 1. 27. So *Paul*, I am not worthy to be called an Apostle: so the *Centurion*, I am not worthy thou shouldst come into my house: I am lesse than the least of thy blessings, saith *Jacob*: Thus let us

Gen. 32. 10.

1 Cor. 14.

24, 25.

come into the presence of *God*, under the meanes of his Word, and then we shall see our own vileness, which will work humiliation; for as the Apostle saith, when a poor simple man doth come, and heares the Prophecie, that is, the Word of *God*, with application unto himself, laying open his particular sins; doubtless he will say, *God* is in you.

3. That we may humble our selves, *let us be content to bear of our sins, & basenes by others*: let us be content that others should acquaint us with any thing that may humble us. Proud men are the devils pipes; and flatterers

terers the Musicians to blow these pipes. Therefore it is, that though men have nothing of their own, yet they love to give heed to flatterers, to blow their bladder full, which do rob them of themselves: Whereas a true wise man will be content to hear of any thing that may humble him before God.

And withall, that we may humble our selves, *look to the time to come, what we shall be ere long*, earth and dust; and at the day of Judgement we must be stript of all: what should puffe us up in this world? all our *Glory shall end in shame, all magnificency in confusion, all riches in poverty*. It is a strange thing, that the Devil should raise men to be proud of that which they have not of their own, but of such things which they have borrowed and beg'd; As for men to be proud of themselves, in regard of their Parents. So, many there are, who think the better of themselves for their apparel, when yet they are clothed with nothing of their own, and so are proud of the very creature: but thus the devil hath besotted our nature, to make us glory in that which should abase us: and to think the better of our selves, for that which is none of our own. Nay, many (in the Church of God) are so far from humbling themselves, that they come to manifest their pride, to shew themselves, to see, and to be seen. Thus the devil besots many thousand silly creatures, that come in vain glory into the House of God; that whereas they should humble themselves before him, they are puffed up with a base empty pride, even before God. Therefore let us take notice of our wonderful proanness, to have a conceit of our selves: for if a man have a new fashion, or some new thing, which no body else knowes besides himself; how wonderfully conceited will he be of himself? Let us take notice I say, of our proanness to this sin of pride, for the best are prone to it. Consider, it is a wonderful hateful sin, a sin of sins, that God most hates: It was this sin that made him thrust *Adam* out of Paradise: it was this sin which made him thrust the evil Angels out of Heaven, who shall never come there again: yea, it is a sin that God cures with other sins, so far he hateth it; as *Paul* being subject to be proud through the abundance of Revelations, was cured of it by a prick in the flesh; being exercised with some dangerous noysom and strange cure. Indeed, it is profitable for some men to fall, that so by their humiliation for infirmities, they may be cured of this great, this sacrilegious sin: and why is it called a sacrilegious sin? because it robs God of his glory: For God hath said, *My glory I will not give to another*. Is not the *grace, goodness, and mercy* of God, sufficient for us, but we must enter into his prerogatives, and exalt our selves? we are both Idols, and Idol-worshippers, *when we think highly of our selves: for we make our selves Idols*: Now God hates Idolatry, but pride is a sacrilege, therefore God hates pride.

If we would humble our selves, let us set before us the Example of our blessed Saviour: for we must be conformable to him, by whom we hope to be saved. He left heaven, took our base nature, and humbled himself to the death of the Crosse, yea to the washing of his Disciples feet, (and among the rest) washt *Judas* feet, and so suffered himself to be killed as a Traitor; and all this to satisfie the wrath of God for us, and that he

4.

Remark.

3.

Phil. 2. 5, 6, 7.

might be a pattern for us to be like minded. Therefore if we would humble our selves by pattern, here is a pattern without all exception: let us be transformed into the likeness of him; yea, the more we think of him, the more we shall be humbled. For it is impossible for a man to dwell upon this meditation of Christ in humility, and with faith to apply it to himself, that he is our particular Saviour; but this faith will abase the heart, and bring it to be like Christ in all spiritual representation. A heart that believeth in Christ, will be humbled like Christ: it will be turned from all fleshly conceit of excellency, to be like him: is it possible, if a man consider he is to be saved, by an abased and humble Saviour, that was pleyable to every base service, that had not a house to hide himself: I say, is it possible, that he which considers of this, should ever be willingly or wilfully proud? Do we hope to be saved by Christ, and will we not be like him? when we were fire-brands of hell, he humbled himself to the death of the Crosse, left heaven and happiness a while, and took our shame to be a pattern to us: we know that Christ was brought into the world, by a humble Virgin: so the heart wherein he dwells, must be an humble heart: if we have true faith in Christ, it will cast us down, and make us to be humbled; for it is impossible that a man should have faith, to challenge any part in Christ, except he be conformed to the Image of Christ in humility, therefore let us take Counsel of Christ; *Learn of me, for I am humble and*

Mat. 11. 29. *meek, and so you shall finde rest to your souls.*

6. Lastly, That we may humble our selves, *Let us work upon our own soules, by reasoning, discoursing, and speaking to our own hearts.* For the soul hath a faculty to work upon it self: now this being a reflected action, to humble our selves; it must be done by some inward action, and what is that? to discourse thus, If so be a Prince should but frown upon me, when I have offended his Law, in what a case should I be? yet, when the great God of Heaven threatens, what an Atheistical unbelieving heart have I, that can be moved at the threatnings of a mortal man, (that is but dust and ashes) and yet cannot be moved with the threatnings of the great God? Consider also, if a man had been so kind and bountifull to me, if I should reward his kindness with unkindness, I should have been ashamed, and have covered my face with shame: and yet how unkind have I been unto God, that hath been so kind to me, and yet I never a whit ashamed?

If a Friend should have come to me, and I have given him no entertainment, what a shame were this? but yet how often hath the holy Ghost knocked at the door of my heart, and suggested many holy motions into me, of *Mortification, Repentance, and Newness of life*, yet notwithstanding, I have given him the repulse, opposed the outward means of grace, and have thought my self unworthy of it; what a shame is this? Thus if we compare our carriage in earthly things, with our carriage in heavenly, this will be a meanes to work upon our hearts, inwardly to humble our selves: Thus was *David* abased; for when *Nathan* came and told him of a rich man, who having many Sheep, spared his own, and took

took away a poor mans, which was all that he had: when *David* considered that he had so dealt with *Uriah*, he was dejected and ashamed of his own courses. Let us labour to work our hearts to humility, into true sorrow, shame, true fear, that so we may have God to pittie, and respect us, who only doth regard a humble soul. Thus we have seen some directions how we may come to humble our selves.

Further, there is an order, method, and agreement in these reflected actions, when we turn the edge of our own souls upon our selves, and examine our selves: for the way that leades to rest, is by the examination of our selves: we must examine our selves strictly, and then bring our selves before God, judge and condemn our selves; for *Humiliation is a kinde of execution*; examination leades to all the rest; so then, this is the order of our actions; there is *Examination of our selves*, strictly before God; then *Inditing our selves*; after that comes *Judging of our selves*.

O that we could be brought to these inward reflected actions, to examine, indite, judge, and condemn our selves, that so we might spare God a labour, and so all things might go well with us.

Now I come to the third thing I propounded, the motives to move us to get this humiliation. First, *Let us consider of the gracious promises that are made to this disposition of humbling our selves*; as *Isaiah* 57. 15. For thus saith he that is Holy and Excellent, he that inhabiteth Eternity, whose Name is the Holy One, I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of an humble and contrite spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to give life to them that are of a contrite heart. So there is a promise that God will give grace to the humble. An example of mercy in this kinde we have in *Manasse*, who, though a very wicked man, yet because he humbled himself, obtained mercy. *Peter* humbled himself, and *David* humbled himself, and both found mercy. And so likewise *Josiah*, yea, and in *James* 4. 10. we are bid to humble our selves under the mighty hand of God, and he will exalt us in due time; there is the promise; As confession of sins, if we confess and forsake our sins, we shall have mercy, and finde pardon. So those that judge themselves, shall not be judged.

3.
Motives to
Humiliation.

A humble heart is a Vessel of all graces; it is a grace it selfe, and a vessel of grace. It doth better the soul, and make it holy: for the soul is never fitter for God, than when it is humbled. It is a fundamentall grace, that gives strength to all other graces: *So much humility, so much grace*: for according to the measure of humiliation, is the measure of other grace, because a humble heart hath in it a spiritual emptiness; humility emptyeth the heart for God to fill it. If the heart be emptied of temporal things, then it must needs be filled with spirituall things: for Nature abhorreth emptiness: Grace much more. When the heart is made low, there is a spiritual emptiness, and what fills this up but the Spirit of God? In that measure we empty our selves, in that measure we are filled with the fulness of God. When a man is humbled, he is fit for all good; but when he is proud, he is fit for all ill, & beats back all good.

God hath but two heavens to dwell in; the Heaven of Heavens, and the heart of a poor humble man. The proud swelling heart, that is full of ambition, high conceits, and self-dependance, will not indure to have God to enter; but he dwells largely, and easily in the heart of an humble man. If we will dwell in Heaven hereafter, let us humble our selves now. The rich in themselves are sent empty away; the humble soul is a rich soul, rich in God; and therefore God regards the lowly, and resists the proud: *As all the water that is upon the hills, runs into the Vallies; so all grace goes to the humble.* The Mountains of Gilboa are accursed; so there is a curse upon pride, because it will not yield to God.

2. Again, *All outward actions benefit other men; but this inward action of humbling a mans self, makes the soul it self good.*

3. *An humble soul is a secure and safe soul;* for a man that is not high, but of a low stature, needs not to fear falling; a humble soul is a safe soul; safe, in regard of outward troubles; for when we have humbled our selves, God needs not follow us with any other judgement; safe, in regard of inward vexation, or any trouble by God; for when the soul hath brought it self low, and laid it self level as the ground, then God ceaseth to afflict it. Will the Plough-man plough, when he hath broken up the ground enough? or doth he delight in breaking up the ground? See what *Isaiab* saith to this purpose, in *Chap.* 28. 28.

Esay 28. 28.

When God seeth that a man hath abased himself, he will not follow with any other judgement: such a one may say to God, Lord, I have kept court in mine own Conscience already, I have humbled and judged my self, therefore do not thou judge me: I am ready to do whatsoever thou wilt, and to suffer what thou wilt have me. I have deserved worse a thousand times, but Lord remember, I am but dust and ashes. Thus God spares his labour, when the soul hath humbled it self; but if we do not do this our selves, God will take us in hand; for *God will have but one God:* now if we will be Gods, to exalt our selves, he must take us in hand to humble us, either first or last. And is it not better for us to humble our selves, than for God to give us up to the merciless rage and fury of men, for them to humble us, or to fall into the hands of God, who is a consuming fire? for when we accuse and judge our selves, we prevent much shame and sorrow. What is the reason God hath given us up to shame and crosses in this world, but because we have not humbled our selves? what is the reason many are damned in hell? because GOD hath given them reason, judgement, and affections; but they have not used them, for themselves to examine their wayes, whether they were in the state of condemnation, or salvation; they never used their affections, and judgement to this end; therefore God was forced to take them in hand. Well, saith *Austin*, all men must be humbled one way or other: either we must humble our selves, or God will; if we will do this our selves, the Apostle promisseth, we shall not be judged of the Lord. But we do not these things as we should, because it is a secret action: we love to do things that the world may take notice of, but this inward humiliation can only be seen by God, and by our own Consciences. Let these Motives there-

1 Cor. 1. 31.

therefore stir us up to humble our selves, for humbled we must be by one way or other; how many judgements might be avoided by humbling our selves? how many scandals might be prevented, if we would judge our selves? what is the reason so many Christians fall into scandalous sins, whereby provoking Gods anger, they fall into the hands of their enemies; but because they spare themselves, and think this humbling themselves a troublesome action? therefore to spare themselves, they run on: because they would not work this upon themselves, they grow to be in a desperate state at last. Wherefore upon any occasion, be humble, let us prepare our selves to meet the Lord our God. When we hear but any noyse of the judgements of God, we should humble our selves as good *Josiah* did: when he did but hear of the threatnings against his Land, it made him humble himself.

But here it may be demanded, considering that wicked men do oftentimes humble themselves, being convinced in their Consciences, and thereupon ashamed, *How may we know holy from hypocritical humiliation?* which is the last thing I propounded concerning humiliation, namely, the notes and marks whereby we may know true humiliation from false, which are these.

Quest.
How true humiliation is known.

First, *Holy Humiliation is voluntary*; for it is a reflected action, which comes from a mans self, it ends where it begins; therefore *Josiah* is said to humble himself; But on the contrary, the humiliation of other men, is against their will. False humiliation is not voluntary, but by force it is extorted from them. God is faine to break, crush, and deal hardly with them, which they grieve and murmur at: but the Children of God have the Spirit of God, which is a free Spirit, that sets their hearts at liberty. For Gods Spirit is a working Spirit, that works upon their hearts, and hereby they willingly humble themselves, whereas the wicked wanting this Spirit of God, cannot humble themselves willingly, but are cast down against their wills. For God can pluck down the proudest, he can break *Pharaohs* courage, who though he was humbled, yet did not humble himself. *A man may be humbled, and yet not humble.* But the Children of God are to humble themselves, not that the grace whereby we humble our selves, is from our selves: But we are said to humble our selves, when GOD doth rule the parts he hath given us; when he sets our wits and understanding on work, to see our misery, and then our will and affection to work upon these: thus we are said to humble our selves when God works in us. An hypocrite, God may humble, and work by him: he may work by graceless persons, but he doth not work in them; but Gods Children have Gods Spirit in them, not only working in them his own works, (as he doth by hypocrites and sinful persons) but his Spirit works in them; so that here is the main difference between true humiliation, and that which is counterfeit: the one is *voluntary*, being a reflected action to work upon, and to humble our selves; but the other is a *forced humiliation*.

Ans. 1.

How we are said to humble our selves.

Remark.

Again, *True humiliation is ever joyned with reformation.* Humble thy self, and walk with thy God, saith the Prophet, *Micah*, 6.2. He hath showed

shewed thee, O man, what he doth require of thee, to humble thy self, and walk with thy God: Now the humiliation of wicked men, is never joyned with reformation; there is no walking with God: *Josiah* reformed himself and his people to outward obedience, as much as he could, but he had not their hearts at command.

Hatred of sin,
how manifested.

1.

Again, sin must appear bitter to the soul, else we shall never be truly humbled for it: there is in every renewed soul, a secret hatred, and loathing of evil, which manifests the soundness both of true humiliation and reformation, and is expressed in three things. 1. In a serious purpose and resolution not to offend God in the least kinde. The Drunkard must purpose to leave his drunkenness, and the swearer resolve between God and his own heart, to forsake his base courses, and cry mightily herein for help from above.

2.

Secondly, there must be a constant indeavour to avoid the occasions and allurements of sin: thus *Job* made a covenant with his eyes, *that he would not look upon a maid*; and thus every unclean and filthy person, should make a covenant with themselves, against the sins which they are most addicted unto; when they came to serve God (in *Hosea* 14. 8.) then *away with Idols*: so must we when we look heaven-ward, cast from us all our sins whatsoever.

Hosea 14. 8.

3.
Psal. 51.

Thirdly, there must be a hatred and loathing of sin in our confessions; we must confess it with all the circumstances, the time when, and place where: we must aggravate our offences, as *David* did, *Against thee have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight*: and as the Apostle, *I was a blasphemer, I was a persecuter*, I was thus and thus. He did not extenuate his sin, and say, The Rulers commanded me so to do: but, *I persecuted the Church out of the wickedness of my own heart*. A true Christian will not hide his sins, but lay them open; the more to abase himself before God. This aggravating of our sins, will make them more vile unto us, and us more humble in the sight of them. True reformation of life is ever joyned with an indignation of all sin, there is such a contrariety in the nature of a Child of God against all evil.

Signes of a
true hatred
of sin.

1.

We should therefore first hate sin universally, not one sin, but every kind of sin, and that most of all which most rules in us, and which is most prevalent in our own hearts: a sincere Christian hates sin in himself most: we must not hate that in another, which we cherish in our selves.

2.

We should hate sin the more, the nearer it comes to us, in our Children, and friends, or any other way; it was *David's* fault, to let *Abraham* his sonne go unreproved in his wicked practices, and *Eli* for not correcting his Sonnes: we see what came of it, even their utter overthrow.

3.

He that truly hates sin, will not think much to be admonished and reprov'd when he erres; a man that hath a bad plant in his ground, that will eat out the heart of it, will not hate another that shall discover such an evil to him; so if any one shall reprove thee for this or that sin, and thou hate him for it, it is a signe corruption is sweet to thee.

Only

Only this caution must be remembred, reproof must not be given with a proud spirit, but in a loving, mild manner, with desire of doing good; there is a great deal of self-love in some men, who in stead of hating sin in themselves and others, approve and countenance it, especially in great men; flattering them in their base humors, and fearing, lest by telling them the truth, they should be esteemed their enemies.

Our hatred of sin may be discerned by our unwillingness to talk of it; he that hates a Snake or Toad, will flee from it; so a man that truly abhors sin, will not endure to come near the occasions of it. What shall we say then of those that prostitute themselves to all sinful delights? as hatred of sin is in our affection, so it will appear in our actions: those that love to see sin acted, did never as yet truly loath it.

It is a sign that we do not hate sin, when we take not to heart, the sins of our land. *Woe is me, that I am constrained to dwell in the tents of Kedar, saith David, mine eyes gush out with teares, because men keep not thy Law. Lots soul was vexed at the unclean conversation of the wicked;* but alas, how do we come short of this? the greatest number are so far from mourning for the abominations of the Land, that they rather set themselves against God, in a most disobedient manner, and presse others to sin against him. Are Magistrates of *David's* mind; to labour to cut off all workers of iniquity from the Land? Indeed, for small trifling things they will do a man justice; but where is the tenderness of Gods glory? where are those that seek to reform Idolatry, Sabbath-breaking, and prophaness amongst us? Pity it is, to see how many do hold the stirrop to the devil, by giving occasions and encouragements to others to commit evil. Do we hate sin, when we are like tinder, ready to receive the least motion to it, as our fashion-mongers, who transform themselves into every effeminate unbeseeming guise? shall we say that these men hate sin, which when they are reprov'd for it, labour to defend it, or excuse it? counting their pride but comeliness, their miserable covetousness but thrift, and drunkenness only good fellowship?

To strengthen our indignation against sin the better, consider 1. the ugliness thereof, how opposite and distastful it is to the Almighty, as appears in *Sodom*, and in the old world. It is that for which God himself hates his own creature, and for which he will say to the wicked at the day of Judgement, *Go ye cursed into everlasting fire.* Sin is the cause of all those diseases and crosses that befall the sons of men. It hath its rise from the *Devil*, who is the father of it, and whose lusts we do, whensoever we offend God.

There is not the least sin, but it is committed against an infinite Majesty; yea, against a good God, to whom we owe our selves, and all that we have, who waits when you will turn to him, and live for ever; but if you despise his goodness, and continue still to provoke the eyes of his glory, is a terrible and revengeful God, and ready every moment to destroy both body and soul in hell.

Sin is the bane of all comfort; that which we love more than our souls, undoes us; it imbitters every comfort, and makes that we cannot perform

perform duties with spiritual life ; our very prayers are abominable to God, so long as we live in known sin ; What makes the houre of death and the day of Judgement terrible but this ?

2. Again, grow in the love of God ; the more we delight in him, the more we shall hate whatsoever is contrary to him ; in that proportion that we affect God and his truth, we will abhorre every evil way ; for these go together ; *Ye that love the Lord, hate the thing that is ill.* The nearer we draw to him, the farther we are separated from every thing below.

And to strengthen our indignation against sin, we should drive our affections another way, and set them upon the right Object. A Christian should consider, Wherefore did God give me this affection of *love* was it to set it on this or that lust, or any sinful course ? or hath he given me this affection of hatred, that I should envy my Brethren, and contemn the good way ? No surely, I ought to improve every faculty of my soul, to the glory of the giver, by loving that which he loves, and hating that which he hates. Gods truth, his wayes and Children, are objects worthy our love : and Sathan with his deeds of darkness, the fittest subjects of our incarnation and hatred.

Fourthly, *True humiliation proceeds from faith*, and is in the faithful, not only when judgement is upon them, but before the judgement comes, which they fore-seeing by faith, do humble themselves. True humiliation quakes at threatnings, for the very frowns of a Father, will terrifie a dutiful Child. As *Josiah*, when he did but hear of the threatnings against the Land, he humbled himself in dust and ashes ; *He rent his clothes* : so true humiliation doth quake at the fore-sight of judgement : but the wicked never humble themselves, but when the judgement is upon them. Carnal people are like men, that hearing Thunder-claps afar off, are never awhit moved ; but when it is present over their heads, then they tremble : so hypocrites care not for judgements a far off : as now when the Church of God is in misery abroad ; we blesse our selves, and think all is well. It is no thanks for a man to be humbled when the judgement is upon him, for so *Pharaoh* was ; who yet when the judgement was off, then he goes to his old byas again.

Let us try our humiliation by these signes ; whether we can willingly humble our selves privately before God, and call our selves to a reckoning, whether we add reformation of life to outward humiliation, when our heart doth tell us that we live in such and such sins : whether our hearts tremble at the threatnings, when we hear of judgments publike or private. What is the ground that many deceive themselves ; they say, if any judgement come upon them, then they will repent, and cry *God mercy* ; and why should I deny my self of my pleasures of sin before ? oh this is but a forced humiliation, not from love to God, but love to thy self ; it is not free, therefore thou mayst go to hell with it. Others defer off their repentance till it be too late ; when they have any sickness upon them, they will cry to God for mercy : this is but *Ahabs* and *Pharaohs* humiliation ; it is not out of any love to God, but meerly forced : it is too late to do it, when God hath seized upon us by any judgment : do

do it when he doth threaten: and now he hath seized upon the parts of the Church abroad already, therefore now meet thy God by repentance.

A fifth difference between true humiliation and false, is, that *with true humiliation is joyned hope, to raise up our souls with some comfort*; else it is a desperation, not a humiliation. The devils do chafe, vex, and fret themselves, in regard of their desperate estate, because they have no hope. If there be no hope, it is impossible there should be true and sound humiliation: but *true humiliation doth carry us to God, that what we have taken out of our selves, by humiliation, we may recover it in God*; therefore *humility is such a grace, that though it make us nothing in our selves, yet doth it carry us to God, who is all in all*. Humiliation works between God and our selves, and makes the heart leave it selfe, to plant and pitch it self upon God, and looks for comfort and assurance from him. And where there is not this, there is no true humiliation. There is nothing more profitable in the world than humility, because, though it seem to have nothing, yet it carrieth the soul to him that fills all in all. Hence it is, that there is an abasing of our selves, for any thing we have done amisse, from love to God, and love to his people, but yet it is joyned with *Hope*; we know God to be a gracious God unto us, and therefore we humble our selves, and are grieved for offending of him.

A sixth difference between true humiliation and false, is this, *That hypocrites are sorrowful for the judgement that is upon them; but not for that which is the cause of the judgement*, which is sin: but the Child of God, he is humbled for sin, which is the cause of all judgements. As good *Josiah*, when he heard read out of *Deuteronomy*, the curses threatened for sin; and comparing the sins of his people, with the sins against which the curses were threatned, he humbled himself for his sin, and the sins of the people. For Gods Children know, *if there were no iniquity in them, there should no adversity hurt them*: and therefore they run to the cause, and are humbled for that. Whereas the wicked, they humble themselves, only because of the smart and trouble which they do endure. The last difference between true humiliation and false, is this, *that true humiliation, is a through humiliation*; therefore it is twice repeated in this verse: *thou didst humble thy self before God*; when thou heardest the words against this place, and against the Inhabitants thereof, and *humbledst thy selfe before me*; it is twice repeated in this verse, & afterward expressed by *rending of clothes & teares*. It was through humiliation; for he dwelt upon the humbling of his own soul: so that the Children of God throughly humble themselves, but the hypocrite, when he doth humble himself, it is not throughly, they count it a light matter. As soon as the judgement is off, they have forgot their humiliation, as *Pharaoh* did. Many will have a few sighes, and hang down the head like a bulrush for a time; but it is like *Ephraims* morning dew, quickly gone; they *have no sound & through humiliation*; it is but a meere offer of humiliation: whereas the children of God, when they begin, they never cease working upon their own hearts with meditation, until they have brought their heart to a blessed temper, as we see in

David,

David, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Daniel, how they did humble themselves.

But why do Gods Children take pains in humbling themselves?

Partly, because it must be done to purpose, else God will not accept it; and partly, because there is a great deal of hardness, and pride in the best, and much adoe before a man can be brought for to humble himself: Therefore we must labour for this. We see what adoe there was before Job could be brought to humble himself; yet Job must be humbled before there comes one of a thousand to comfort him, as Job 33. If a man be once thoroughly and truly humbled, he shall soon have comfort. By these marks, we may know true humiliation, from an humiliation counterfeit.

Quest. But here may arise another question, *How may we know when we are humbled enough, or when we are grieved enough?*

Ans. To this I answer, That there is not the same measure of humiliation required in all: for those whom God doth pick out for some great work, he doth more humble them than others, as he did Moses and Paul, before he wrought the great work of converting the Gentiles. So David before he came to be King, was a long time humbled. Again, there are others that have been greater sinners, and more openly wicked in their courses than others, and in them a greater measure of humiliation is required. Again, there are others that are more tenderly brought up from child-hood, who have often renewed their repentance; these need not to be humbled so much as others: for humiliation should be proportionable unto the sinful estate of the soul; which because it differs in divers men, in like manner their humiliation ought to differ. But to answer the question more directly, *We are said to be humbled enough.*

Ans. First, when we have wrought our souls to a hearty grief, that we have offended God; when we have a perfect and inward hatred of all sin, and when thou dost see the truth of thy grief, by leaving off all thy sinful courses. ~~For that, dost thou hate and leave thy sinful course? then thou art sufficiently humbled: go away with peace and comfort, thy sins are forgiven thee.~~ Therefore it is not a light humiliation that will serve the turn, but our hearts must be wrought unto a perfect hatred, and leaving of all sins; for if this be not, we are not sufficiently humbled as yet. And when we finde our selves to hate, and leave sin in some measure, then fasten our souls by faith, as much as may be, upon the mercy of God in Jesus Christ; for the soul hath two eyes, the one to look upon it self, and our vileness, to humble us the more; the other to fasten upon the mercy of God in Christ, to raise up our souls. For if the whole soul were fastned upon its own misery and vileness; then there could not be that humiliation which ought to be, neither could we serve God with such chearfulness; therefore we must have our souls raised up to Gods mercy.

Now let us labour for the first, because the devil is so main an enemy unto it; for he knows well enough, that so much as we are humble, and go out of our selves to God, and rest upon him, so much we stand impregnable against his temptations, that he cannot prevail against us: and so much as we do not trust in God, but upon the creature, so much

much we lie open to his snares. Therefore all his temptations tend to draw us to trust in the creature, to have a conceit of our selves, and to draw our hearts from relying upon God. His first plot is alwayes to make us rest in our selves. Therefore let us labour to go out of our selves, to see a vanity in our selves, and a happiness in God, that so going out of our selves, and relying upon God and his mercies, we may stand safe against Satans temptations.

This should teach us to take heed of such affections as tend directly contrary to humiliation; for how can it be, but that those should be proud, that hold the doctrine of the *Church of Rome*; as first, that we have no Original sin in us, but it is taken away by Baptisme: that we are able to fulfil the law lawfully in this life; this is presumptuous, whereas *Paul* cries out after Baptisme, O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death? *Rom. 7.* Nay, they can do more; namely, works of Supererogation, whereby they merit heaven. How do these blow up the heart of man, and make it swell with pride? this must needs make men very proud, to think that a man can merit by works: with such blasphemous opinions they have infected the world, and led captive millions of souls unto hell. Therefore let this be a rule of discerning true Religion: for surely, *That is true Religion, which doth make us go out of our selves*: that takes away all from our selves, and gives all the glory to God, which makes us to plead for salvation, by the mercy of God through the merits of Christ; but our Religion doth teach us thus; therefore it is the true Religion, and will yield us sound comfort at the last. Thus much for inward humiliation, the humbling of our selves, as *Iosiah* did.

supra

Do not

much we depend on his grace. Therefore all his temptations tend to draw us out of the creature, to have a concept of our selves, and to draw our hearts from relying upon God. His first plot is always to make us rest in our selves. Therefore let us labour to go out of our selves to find a vanity in our selves, and a happiness in God, that to going out of our selves, and relying upon God and his mercies, we may stand safe against Satans temptation.

This should teach us to take heed of such afflictions as tend directly contrary to humiliation: for how can it be, but that those should be proud, that hold the doctrine of the inward witness; as that we have no Original sin in us, but it is taken away by Baptism: that we are able to fulfil the law perfectly in this life; this is presumptuous, whereas Paul cries out after Baptism, O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death? Again, if they can do more; namely, works of supererogation, whereby they merit heaven. How do these blow up the heart of man, and make it swell with pride? This shall needs make men very proud, to think that a man can merit by works: with such blasphemous opinions they have infected the world, and led captive millions of souls into hell. Therefore let this be a rule to distinguish the Religion: for surely, that is true Religion, that doth make us grow poor, that takes away all from our selves, and gives all the glory to God, which makes us to plead for salvation by the mercy of God through the merits of Christ; but our Religion doth teach us thus: therefore it is the true Religion, and will yield us found comfort in the last. Thus much for inward humil- ity, the humbling of our selves, as follows.



THE ART OF MOURNING.

SERM. III.

2 CHRON. 34. 27.

But because thine heart was tender, and thou didst humble thy selfe before God, when thou heardest his words against this place, and against the Inhabitants thereof, and humbledst thy selfe before me, [and didst rend thy clothes, and weep before me, I have even heard thee also, saith the Lord.]



As the waters issuing from the Sanctuary mentioned by the Prophet Ezekiel, grew deeper and deeper; first, to the Anles, then to the knees, and after to the loynes, until it came to an over-flowing River; so hath it fared with us in handling of this Text; wherein, from tendernefs of heart, we have waded deeper and deeper, through the mysteries of humiliation in the inward man, until at length from thence we are broken forth to the outward expressions of *Josiahs* inward humiliation, his *rending of his cloathes*, and overflowing floods of *Teares*: which sprung partly from his apprehension of ruine at hand to come upon Gods Sanctuary, and partly from the sorrow and sense of sin in himself and the people, as causes of his feare.

But to come to the Text now read in your hearing, [*And didst rend thy clothes, and weep before me,*] here we have set down,

The outward expression of Josiahs humiliation.

For true humiliation shews it self, as well outwardly as inwardly: now
E 2 the

the outward expression of his inward affection is set down in two things.

1. *By rending of his Cloathes.*
2. *By his weeping.*

No doubt but he did express his sorrow, as well by words, as by these gestures; although they be not here set down with the other: for he might for the time be surprized with so great a measure of sorrow and grief; as could not be expressed presently at that instant: or we may conceive; that for the time he was so thoroughly humbled, that he could not speak orderly, wherefore God did regard and look more to his affections and teares, than to his words; *for he rent his Cloathes, and wept before God.* As it is written of the poor *Publican*, that he could not say much, but lookt down with his eyes, saying, *Lord be merciful to me a sinner:* and as it was with the poor woman in the Gospel, who came to Christ weeping, and washed his feet with her teares, yet she said nothing; and as when Christ (upon the Cocks third crowing) looked upon *Peter*; we finde not what he said, but that he went out and wept bitterly: so here (we may imagine) *Josiah's* affection was too full of sorrow, to speak distinctly and composedly: for from a troubled soul can proceed nothing but troubled words: from a broken heart, comes broken language. But howsoever, likely it is, that *Josiah* did speak somewhat; for God saith, *I have even also heard thee.* But to leave this, and come to the outward expressions here set down, let us learn somewhat from *his rending of his cloathes and weeping.*

Rending of cloathes, was a thing frequently used in the old times, as we see in the Scriptures: and it was a visible representation of the inward sorrow of the heart: *Job* rent his cloathes: his friends rent their cloathes: *Paul* and *Barnabas* rent theirs, *Acts* 14. 14. The *High Priest* rent his cloathes, being to accuse Christ: and *Hezekiah* rent his cloathes, when he heard the words of *Rabshakeb*. Nay, this was a common action, and frequently used among the Heathen also; for they likewise upon any disastrous accident, were used to rend their cloaths; as we read of a Heathen King, that having his City invaded roundabout with enemies, rent his cloaths. So that it hath been the custom, both of Gods Church, and also of Heathen, to rend their cloaths. *But what is the ground or reason of this?* The reason of such their rending of cloaths, was, because that in their sorrow, they thought themselves unworthy to wear any: they forgot all the comforts of this life; as holy *Josiah* forgets his estate, his Throne, his royal Majesty, and Crown; He looks up to the great God, and considers duly whom he stood under, and the miserable estate of the people, over whom he was governor, and thereupon he rends his cloathes, shewing hereby, that he was unworthy of those Ornaments wherewith he was covered. We know, that cloathes have divers uses; as first for necessity, to cover our nakedness, and to preserve from the injuries of the weather,

2. Secondly, cloathes are given for *distinction of sexes and degrees*; to know

Luk. 8. 13.

Luk. 7. 38.

Luk. 22. 61.
62.

Iob 1. 20.
Iob 2. 12.
Mat. 14. 63.
Esa. 31.

Quest.
Sol.

1.

2

know the great man from the meane, the woman from the man.

And lastly, They serve for Ornaments, to honour our vile flesh, which is so base, that it must fetch ornaments from base creatures. Now so farre as they served for ornaments, he rent his cloathes, as thinking himself unworthy of any garments; for he being in grief, doth rend his cloathes, thinking with himself, why should I stand upon cloathes, and outward things to cover me? God is angry, till he be appeased I will take no pleasure in any earthly thing; Therefore apprehending the wrath of God, he rent his cloathes. Well, this is but an outward expression, and therefore it must proceed from inward truth. This rending of cloathes was a national ceremony, which seeing we have not used amongst us, we must rend our hearts with grief: for the rending of clothes, shewes the rending of the heart before; without which there is no acceptance with God: for the rending of the cloathes without the rending of the heart is but hypocrisie, as *Joel 2. 13.* he sayes, *Rend your hearts, and not your Garments*, ye hypocrites: So that *outward expressions of sorrow, are no further good, than when they come from inward grief and affection.* Now when both these are joyned together, it is a comely thing; for wherein stands comeliness, but when all the parts of our body do agree in proportion? when one limb is not bigger than another, so it is uncomely, and an hypocritical thing, for a man to have all outward expressions, and yet to have no inward grief; this is but acting of humiliation, when we hang down the head like a Bul-rush, and the heart is not sound. But outward expressions are good, when the heart is grieved to purpose; when they proceed from inward humiliation.

And why ought this to be? Because both body and soul have a part in the action of sin; therefore it is needful, that they should be joyned in humiliation for sin; there is no sin of the body, but the Soul hath part in it; nor any sin in the soul, but the body hath part in it; therefore both body and soul should be humbled together. Labour then to have outward expressions, and shewes of sorrow, come from a true sorrowful heart. There be two things in the religious actions of men.

Quest.
Ans.

1. *There is the outward action or expression.*
2. *There is the inward, which gives life to the other.*

The outward is easie, & subject to hypocrisie: It is an easie matter to rend clothes, and to force teares; but it is a hard matter to afflict the soul. The heart of man taketh the easiest wayes, and lets the hardest alone, thinking to please God with that, but God will not be served so: for he must have the inward affections, or else he doth abhorre the outward actions. Therefore let us well labour for humble hearts, as humble gestures; we must rend our hearts, and not our cloathes, when we come into the presence of God, we must labour as to shew humility, so to have humility: that so we may not be like hypocrites, who make shew of a great deal of devotion in carriage, but yet have none in heart; a great deal of outward humiliation, when as they have none within.

The Papists are wicked & erroneous in all their devotions; especially

in the point of Justification, and in other points of the worship of God: for is it not a superstitious error, to think to please God with outward observations, when they do not come from inward truth? their Religion is all an outside, consisting meerly of outward performances: but true devotion, the Scripture teacheth, commeth from a heart judicially understanding the case of its own self; considering what a great God it hath to deal withall; a God full of Glory and Majesty. Doth God love blinde Sacrifices? no: devotion must come from the heart, and spread it self from thence into the Countenance, and Carriage; for then it is true, when the outward expresseion doth shew the inward disposition.

Vs. This reproves the negligence of people in these times: where is their inward humiliation? nay, where is their outward humiliation? In Popery, there is an acting of humiliation; they whip themselves in their bodies, and other such outward fooleries and gestures, they have in their hypocritical devotions: thus do they in some sort, humble themselves: but how few are there amongst us, that humble themselves in apprehension of their own misery? who yet if they look to their own persons, have cause enough: yea, and how few are there, that are humbled for the miseries of the Church abroad: where shall we finde a mourning soul?

Well, seeing it is not a custom amongst us, to rend our Cloathes; yet let us make conscience of being proud in apparel: for it is a wicked, and a fearful thing, when men will regard some wicked and foolish fashion, and set more by it, than by Gods favour, threatnings, & judgements abroad. Many there are, that instead of rending their cloathes, come into Gods House, to shew their bravery; to see and to be seen: where they should most of all humble themselves, there they come to shew their pride, even before God: whereas they should come to hear the voyce of the great God of Heaven, and stand in his presence, who is a consuming fire; before whom the very Angels cover their faces, and the Earth trembles; they contrariwise, come to out-face, and to provoke him with their pride. we see *Josiah*, though he were a King, he rent his clothes, forgot all his bravery; and considers himself, not so much a King over the people, over whom God had set him, as a subject to God: wherefore, though (as I said) the custom of rending of clothes, be not used in our Church; yet let us ever make conscience of rending our hearts, and so to make our peace with God, as this good King did. It followes.

And wept it before me.

In which words is set down, the second outward expresseion of *Josiahs* inward humiliation; which is weeping: this came neerer to him, than rending of Cloathes; for it touched his body. Hence in a word observe, That

Dof. 1. the body and soul must joyn together in the action of humiliation: for the soul and body go together in the acting of sin, therefore they must

Reason. go together in humiliation. As they were both made by God, and redeemed by Christ, so they sin, and practice good together. Now I will shew three wayes, wherein the soul and body have communion one with

with another, whereby it may appear how reasonable and fitting a thing it is, they should be both humbled together.

First, the soul & body have communion together, *by way of Impression, or Information*; for sensible things, have an impression upon the senses, and so come into the soul; for nothing comes into it, but through the senses of the body: because, though the soul may imagine Golden Mountains, and things that it never saw, yet the working of the soul depends upon the body, for the body informs it of all outward objects. As the body is beholding to the soul, for the ruling and guiding of it; so the soul is beholding to the body for many things: as now in the very Sacrament, God helps the soul with the senses: Christ (as it were) in the Sacrament, enters through the senses, more lively than in the preaching of the Word: for there he enters in by the eares, but in the Sacrament he is seen, tasted, handled, felt: so that the soul and body have communion together, *by way of Information*.

Why both
soul and bo-
dy must be
humbled to-
gether.

Secondly, the soul and body have communion together, *by way of Temptation*: for the soul standing in need of many outward things, which are pleasing and delightful; and having sympathy with the body, it is led away by the body. Outward Objects are pleasing to the senses of carnal men: now these passing thorow the senses into the soul, it is led away, and so they become a dangerous temptation.

Thirdly, the soul and the body have communion together, both in sinful and in good actions, *By way of subjection or execution*; for God hath made the body, with the parts thereof, to be the instruments, and weapons of the soul. The body is a house wherein the soul is kept; it is a Shop for the soul; Now the soul useth the body, with the members thereof, as instruments, or weapons; either to honour God, or dishonour him: The wicked fight against God with all the members of their body, with their eyes, tongue, feet, hands: Now the body having thus a part in sin, as well as the soul, therefore it is necessary, that the body and soul should joyn together in humiliation.

Here we must take heed of a notable sleight of the Devil in Popery. the Papiſts think, the body only in fault for sin, and therefore they humble and afflict their bodies for it, while they puffe up their soul with pride, a conceit of merit and satisfaction. *They are falsely humble, and truly proud, while they afflict the body and omit the soul*: they are falsely humbled; because they humble their body only: but truly proud, because they think by afflicting, and humbling their bodies, to merit. But let us take heed of this grosse error, and remember to let both soul and body joyn in the work.

Cautioni

The second thing here to be noted, is, That when God will afflict, or humble a man, it is not a Kingdom that will save him: As Josiah, though he were a Monarch, (for he was an absolute Monarch) yet if God threaten, his Kingdom can do him no good. If God will abase men (whether they be his Children or enemies) it is not a Kingdom can protect them. When God shewed Belshazzar the hand-writing upon the wall, he could take no comfort in any thing: yea, his dear Children, if he shew

Deut. 2.

Dan. 5. 5.

but

but tokens of his displeasure against them, though they be Kings, (as *Iosiah* was) yet he can humble them. If God roare, it is not their greatness can keep them; if not now, yet he will make them to tremble hereafter.

Dott. 3. The third thing here that we learn from the example of *Iosiah*, being a King, is, That *teares and mourning for sin, when it comes from inward grief, is a temper well befitting any man*: It is a carriage befitting a King: it is not unbecoming any, of what sexe or degree soever: it is no womanish or base thing: when one hath to deal with God, he must forget his estate, and take the best way to meet with God. This is evident by many instances: for *David*, though a man of Warre; yet when he had to deal with God, he watered his Couch with his teares: So *Hezekiah*, though a great King, yet he humbled himself: nay, our blessed Saviour himself, did it with strong cryes and teares, when he had to deal with God.

Psal. 6. 6.

Heb. 5. 7.

Vse.

2 Sam. 6. 21.

This serves for the justification of this holy abasement, & humbling of our selves. When we have to deal with God, then all abasement is little enough: *I will be yet more vile than thus*, saith holy *David*. So let us say when we have to deal with God; *I will be yet more vile*, and so cast our selves down before the Lord: *All expression of devotion is little enough, so it be without hypocrisie*. Yet I pray give me leave once again, to give warning unto you concerning outward actions: for most have conceived wrong of devotion and humiliation: they think that devotion is only in outward actions; as in outward act to hear a little, to read, confer, or pray a little, whereas in truth, these outward acts do only make up the body of devotion, which without the soul; namely, the inward religious affection, looking unto God, is no better than a dead carrion. Our outward expression must come from the apprehension of the goodness, mercy and justice of God, before whom the very Angels vayne their Faces. It is not outward devotion that will serve the turn, as to come to the church with this bare conceit, and fore-thought; I will go pray, and kneel, and expresse all outward carriage, in the mean time, neglecting to stirre up the soul to worship God with these or like thoughts; I will go to the place where God is, where his truth is, where his Angels are, to hear that Word, whereby I shall be judged at the last day. Therefore let all holy actions come from within first, and thence to the outward man. Let us work upon our hearts, a consideration of the *Goodnesse, Justice, Majesty and Mercy* of God; and then let there be an expression in body, such as may bring men off from their sins: for else there is a spirit of superstition, that will draw men farre from God, in seeming services; conceiving that God will accept of outward and formal expressions onely. Well, we see that weeping and mourning for sins, is a carriage not unbecoming for a King: therefore it is a desperate madnesse, not to humble our selves, and be abased, now we have to deal with God. Your desperate Atheists of the world will not tremble at threatnings, nor humble themselves, till death comes, which humbles them, and makes them tremble; where-

as on the contrary, that soul which feeling the wrath of God, humbles it selfe betimes, and trembles at threatnings; that soul (I say) (when the great judgement of death comes, and appearance before God,) looks death in the face with comfort; whereas your desperate Athiests; that can now scorn God, swear at every word, and blaspheme God to his face; let God but shew his displeasure, they tremble and quake, upon any noyse of feare: therefore when we have to deal with God, it is wisdom, and the ground of all courage, to humble and abase our selves with fear, as *Josiah* did, although he were a King.

And thou didst weep before me.

His tender heart did melt it self into teares: In the first clause of the Verse, you have *his tender heart* set down, and here we have *the melting of the tender heart*: there we have the *Cloud*, here we have the *Shower*. Therefore I will speak something of the original of teares. Tears whence We know that teares are strained from the inward parts, through the eyes: for the understanding first conceiveth cause of grief upon the heart, after which the heart sends up matter of grief to the brain, and the brain being of a cold nature, doth distil it down into teares; so that if the grief be sharp and piercing, there will follow teares after from most. But to come to the particulars, we see the provoking cause of teares, from without, in *Josiah* was the danger of his Kingdom; hearing the judgement of God threatned against his Countrey and place; whence, for the Instruction of Magistrates, I will inforce this Point.

That it concerns Magistrates above all others, to take to heart any Doct. 4.
danger whatsoever, that is upon their people: for as Kings are set above all other people in place, so they should be above them in goodness and Grace: they ought above all others, to take to heart any judgement, either upon them already, or feared; as good *Iosiah* did, whom (while he looked not so much to himself, and his own good, as to that state, whereof he was King) the very threatnings of judgement against it, made to expresse his grief with teares: the bond that knits the KING to the PEOPLE, and the PEOPLE to the KING, requires this; for Kings are Heads, and Shepherds over the People. Now the Shepherd watcheth over his Floek: the Head is quickly sensible of any hurt of the Body: all the senses are provident for the Body: So it should be with all great persons in Authority, they should cherish the good Estate of the Subjects, as their own: for they are committed to their care. And even as the Head doth care for the Body, and fore-cast for it: so those that are in Authority, should fore-cast for any good to the Body of the COMMON-WEALTH. An excellent Example of this, we have in holy *David*; who, when there was a judgement comming upon his People, Lord (saith he) let the judgement come upon me, and my Fathers house: what have these Sheep done, 2 *Sam.* 24. 17? And surely such Magistrates, as are tenderly affected with the case of those under them, shall lose nothing by it: for the people likewise will carry a tender affection towards them again.

again. As we see when the people went to fight against *Abſalom*, they would not let *David* go with them, but they ſaid to him, *Thou art worth ten thouſand of us*; that is, they had rather that ten thouſand of them ſhould die in the battel, than that *David* ſhould have any hurt come to him: ſo he loſt nothing for his love and affection towards the people, for they ſhewed the like love to him in his diſtreſs. So likewise when *Joſiah* was dead, the people wept largely for him, (for with him periſhed all the glory of that flouriſhing Kingdom) as we may read in the Story, *2 Chron. 35. 24, 25.* compared with *Zech. 12. 11.* They mourned for him, with an exceeding great mourning, in *Hadrimmon*, in the Valley of *Megiddo*: ſo that there is no love loſt between the Magiſtrate and the people; for if the Magiſtrate be tenderly affected to them, the people will likewise weep for him again, and lament his caſe in his diſtreſſe. But now to come to a more general inſtruction, we will leave ſpeaking of *Joſiah* as King, and take him into conſideration as an holy man, and make him a pattern unto us all, of whatſoever civil condition we be: and ſo we learn this point.

Dist 5.

That, *It is the duty of every Chriſtian, to take to heart the threatenings of God againſt that place, and people where he doth live; to take to heart the afflictions and miſeries of the Church and Common-wealth; the grievances of others, as well as his own: The mourning and weeping of Joſiah was for the eſtate of the Church, when he heard the judgement threatened againſt the place, and Inhabitants thereof. There be teares of compaſſion for our ſelves, and for others, theſe were both of them in Joſiah; for no doubt, but he wept for himſelf and his own ſins, and over and above his own, had ſpecial teares of compaſſion for his people. Thus then it becomes a Chriſtian, that will have the reward of Joſiah, to aſe his heart, as he did, for the eſtate of the Church: Good *Nebemiah* took to heart the grief of his Countrey: the joy of his own preferment, did not ſo much glad him, as the grief for his Nation the Jewes, caſt him down. What joy can a true heart have, now the Church of God is in affliction? we are all of one houſe; when one part of the houſe is aſe, the other part had need to look to it ſelf. There were many things wrought upon the heart of *Joſiah*, which cauſed him to weep: ſo there are many cauſes ſhould move us; as the ſeeing of the ſins that are committed in the Land, ought to make us grieve, and to expreſſe our grief one way or other. And the love of Chriſt (were it in us) would make us mourn; as when we hear God blaſphemed, and his name diſhonoured, and when we ſee the people bent to Idolatry; how can this but break, even a heart of ſtone: nay, a gracious heart will mourn, and weep for the judgement of God upon wicked men, conſidering them as men, and as the creatures of God. Thus Chriſt wept for the wicked Jewes in *Jeruſalem*; though they were his enemies. O *Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem*, &c. and ſo good *Ieremy*, though he were ill uſed, and exceedingly abuſed by the people, yet he ſaith, *O that my head were water, and mine eyes a fountain of teares, that I might weep day and night for them*: Though they had wronged, perſecuted, and counted him a contentious Fellow, onely becauſe*

Luk. 19. 41.
Jer. 9. 1.

he

he taught the truth of God : yet such was the affection of tender hearted *Jeremy*, that he desired that he might weep day and night for them. But continual weeping must have a lasting spring affording continual issues of teares, which *Jeremy* not finding in himself (such is the dryness of every mans heart, that it is soon emptied of teares,) and thereupon fearing he should not weep enough, he doth earnestly desire it, and if hearty wishes may obtain, he would have it to be supplied with a plentiful measure of teares in his Lamentation, for the ensuing calamity of his people : *O that mine head were a Well of water, and mine eyes a Fountain of teares, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!*

But why did not *Jeremy* rather pray, that they had a Fountain of teares, to weep for themselves?

Quest.

Because he knowing the hardness of their hearts, thought it to no end to intreat them to weep for themselves; their hearts were harder then the nether Millstone; they never desired it, yet he weeps for them. Thus we see how godly men have been formerly affected. And it is our duty even to weep and mourn for the very wicked. We have matter enough of lamentation and weepings, at this day, if we look abroad; and at home, if we look to judgements felt and feared, we have cause to weep before the decree come out against us. Therefore we should meet God before-hand: it is no thank for a man to be humbled, when the judgement is come upon him: but when we can weep before the judgement is come, it is a sign of Faith. Happy were we, if Faith could make us do that, which sense makes wicked men to do. If the believing of the judgement before it come, would make us seek unto God; oh, how God would love such a one! this should teach us every one to mourn: and indeed a Christian soul cannot but do it; and that for divers reasons.

Ans.

First, *Because of that sympathy between the Head and the Members:* A Christian hath the Spirit of Christ, who takes to heart the miseries of the Church. Now, can that Spirit of Christ be in any, and he not affected as Christ in Heaven is affected? surely no.

1.
Reasons why
a Christian
must weep
for others.

Again, it must needs be so, *in regard of the Communion which is between the members of the body.* We are all a part of one mystical body, whercof Christ is the head: what member can he be of this body that doth not take to heart the miseries of the other members? *There is want of life, where there is no sense of misery.*

2.

Thirdly, *Where there is true grace, there will be weeping and mourning for the Church, in regard of the insolency of the Churches enemies, and their blasphemous speeches;* where is now their God? their Religion? what is now become of their reformation? what Child can heare the reproach and dishonour of God his Father, without bowels of compassion?

3.

Again, *A gracious man will weep, in regard of the danger of not mourning:* for by not mourning, we have a kind of guilt lying upon us; for we make the sins and miseries of the Church our own. As Paul tells the *Corinthians* (reproving them for not mourning,) *1 Cor. 5. 2.* Therefore, as we are a part of the body, so we must have a part of the shame & grief.

4.

Again,

Ezek. 9. 4.

Again, God hath promised to mark and single out all those that mourn for the sins of the time: therefore on the contrary, those that do not mourn, are in a dangerous estate.

3.

Again, *We must adde reformation unto lamentation; else the whole Church and Common-wealth is in danger.* If Achan be not sought out and punished, the whole state is in danger, and lyes open to the wrath of God: for these reasons we ought to take to heart the sins and miseries of the times; for the Spirit of God is in every Christian, that will not suffer him otherwise to be, then to weep and mourn for his own sins, and for the sins and miseries of others.

1.
Vse.

If this be so, what will become of those, that take not to heart, nor mourn for the miseries of the Church? that judge not aright of the poor, but censure the judgement of the afflicted, add affliction to the afflicted, and misery to the miserable? what shall we say to those that are so far from helping God, that they help the enemies of God, and are grieved at the heart, to hear any cause of comfort on the Churches part? whose hearts it doth joy to hear of any overthrow on the Churches side? such false hearts there are; and many that are glad of the sins of others, thinking thereby, to hide their own wicked courses: these men are farre from mourning: let our souls also be far from entring into their secrets.

Vse 2.
How to get
this mourning
of others.
Quest.
Answ. 1.

If this be so, that holy men ought to take to heart, and weep for the judgements of the common-wealth, both felt and feared; and also for the judgement of God upon the Churches abroad: then *how may we get this weeping and mourning for others*: I answer, first, *remove the impediments that hinder*, as first, a hard and stony heart, which is opposite to tenderness: *Iosiah* had a melting heart, and therefore it was soon dissolved into teares. Our hearts are worse than brasie or stone: for workmen can work upon them, but nothing will work upon the hard heart of man. All the judgements in the world will not work upon it; for all the Israelites saw the judgements of God in *Egypt*, and all his mercies and blessings unto them in the Wilderness: yet it would not work upon them, because they had hard hearts. Therefore let us get a good spring of teares, that is, a soft and tender heart, and let us begge it of God, for it is his promise, to give us tender hearts; and then there will be an easie expression of it in the outward man.

The second, Let us beware of the love of earthly things, & get a heart truly loving towards God; for love is compared to fire, & fire (among many other properties it hath) melts the gold, & makes it plyable. Heat is the Organ of the soul, whereby it doth any thing, & the instrument of nature: so spiritual heat, a warm soul, warmed with the love of God, and of our Christian Brethren, will make the heart plyable; and melt into teares. Therefore get a loving heart, filled with love to God and Christian Brethren, that we may mortifie self-love, which dries up the soul: there can be no melting in such a self-loved soul. Let us therefore labour for spiritual love, to crosse and subdue carnal self-love; It is this blessed heat, that must send forth this heavenly water of teares;

teares; It is the spirit of love, that must yield this distillation from the broken heart; this works all heavenly affection in us; therefore Christ compriseth all the Commandements under love. And indeed, that is all.

Thirdly, If we would have our souls fit to grieve, *let us be content to see as much as we can, with our own eyes, the miseries of others*: the best way to weep, is to enter into the house of mourning, and set before our eyes the afflictions of others: the very sight of misery, is a meanes to make the soul weep. And let us be willing to hear, that which we cannot see; as *Nehemiah* was content to hear, nay to enquire concerning the Church abroad, and when he heard that it was not well with them, it made him weep. Every man will cry, what newes? but where is the man, when he heares of the newes beyond the Seas, that sends up sighs to God? Prayer, that he would take pity upon his Church? It is a good way, to use our senses, to help our souls to grieve.

Again, let us read the estate of Gods Church, what it hath been from the beginning of the world; what miseries Gods children have endured in former ages, by reason of Warre, and the like: that so we may work grief upon our own hearts. We have alwayes matter of grief, while we are in this world: if we look abroad, we shall finde matter of mourning. And surely, we should labour to mourn, if we desire to be blessed. *For blessed are they that mourn, they shall be comforted.*

Fifthly, that we may get this weeping and mourning, *let us work this tender affection upon our own hearts*. The soul hath a faculty to work upon it self, therefore let us shame our selves for our own deadnes, drynesse and spiritual barrenness this way, that we can yield no sighes, no teares for God, for his Church and glory. Let us reason thus with our souls. If I should lose my wife, or childe, or my estate; this naughty heart of mine would weep, and be grieved: but now there is greater cause of mourning, for my self and the Church of God; and yet I cannot grieve. *Augustine* saith, he could weep for her that killed her self, out of love to him: but he could not weep for his own want of love to God; we have many that will weep for the losse of friends, wealth, and such like things: but let them lose Gods favour, be in such an estate, there is but one step between them and hell; they are never grieved, nor moved at it. Therefore seeing they do not weep for themselves, let us weep for them. Can we weep, when we see a man hurt in his body, and ought we not much more, for the danger of his soul? therefore, let us work this sorrow upon our hearts. Now we are to receive the Sacrament, which is a Feast, and therefore must be eaten chearfully; the Passe-over was a banquet, and therefore to be eaten with joy; but withall, it was used to be eaten with sowe hearbs, so must it be in this blessed banquet, which God hath provided for our souls; there must be sorrow as well as joy: It is a mixt action, and therefore it must be eaten with sowe hearbs, presenting to the eyes of our mind, the object of the old *Adam*; thinking upon the vilenesse of our nature, that have such filthy speeches, disobedient actions, such rebellious thoughts in us: great need have I of the mercy and favour of

God, to look upon such a defiled soul as I am : and also having in the eyes of our soul, Christ crucified; look upon Christ, which is crucified in the Sacrament sacramentally : what was that which broke the body of Christ, was it not sin? that sin which I so often cherish? this pride, this envy, unbelief, and hypocrisie, this covetousness of minde, was that which put Christ into such torment. It was not the nayls, but my sins. The Sacrament must work upon our hearts, so as to work grief in us : we must weep as the people did for *Josiah*, according as God hath promised we should do : It is said, *Zach. 12.* They shall look on him whom they have pierced by their sins, and weep and mourn for him, as one that mourneth for his onely Sonne. So then the Sacrament is not only a matter of joy and thanks, but a matter of sorrow; therefore if we would joy in the Sacrament, let us first be humbled for sin, and then joy in it afterwards.

1 Thel. 5. 16. But here it may be objected; *Are we not bid for to rejoyce alwayes? and alwayes to be thankful? then how can these agree? for weeping and mourning are contrary to thanksgiving and joy?*

Answ. To this I answer; That the estate of a Christian in this life, is a mixt estate; both inward and outward : his outward estate, and the inward disposition of the soul is mixt. Therefore having this mixt estate, our carriage must be answerable ; as we have alwayes cause of mourning, and rejoycing, both from that in us, and from without us : therefore a Christian ought to rejoyce alwayes, and in some measure to mourn alwayes. As for example.

A Christian hath cause of mourning within him, when he looks upon his sinful Nature, and the sins which he doth daily commit : yet notwithstanding at the same time, there is cause of joy, and great reason to blesse God ; when he considers that God hath pardoned his sins in Christ. Thus the Apostle did, *Rom. 7. 24.* when he looked upon himself, and his own vileness, he cries out, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death!* yet for all this, at the same time he rejoyceth, and blesseth God; *I thank God through Jesus Christ my Lord, who hath freed me from the Law of sin and of death:* Thus you see, we have alwayes in respect of our selves, both cause of joy and mourning ; therefore we must do both. So have we in like manner, continual causes, both of joy and sorrow from without us, if we look to the Church of God : of joy, in regard there is a God in Heaven, who hath an eye to his Church, who pittieeth and tendereth it as the Apple of his eye ; that takes to heart the afflictions of it ; that will be glorious in the midst of the troubles of his people, by upholding, comforting, and turning all to the best for them : of sorrow also ; in respect of the miseries under which the Church of God doth groan, of which we are bound to take notice, and so to weep with them that weep, *Esay 22. 12. Amos 6. 6. Rom. 12. 15.* you see the rare mixture of joy and sorrow in a Christian, whereby he is made capable of this great priviledge ; as neither to be swallowed up of grief, because that his sorrow proceedes from a heart, where there is cause of joy; nor to lose himself in excessive joy, because he alwayes sees in

in himself cause of sorrow. Now, as it is to be seen in other mixtures, that there is not at all times an equal quantity or portion of each particular thing to be mingled, but now more of the one, and at another time more of the other, according as the cause doth vary: so is it in this mixture of joy and sorrow for our selves, and for others; sometimes joy must abound with the causes of it, & sometimes sorrow with its causes, doth superabound. It will be worth our inquiry therefore to know when to joy most, and when to weep most. *Which we shall know by Gods call in outward occasions, and by the spirit of discretion within us*, which will guide us; For God hath given his children a spirit of discretion, that will teach them when to joy, and when to weep most. As God calls to mourning now in these times, that the Church of God is in misery; as he calls for sighes for the afflictions of *Joseph*, so the spirit of discretion within us, doth tell us what to do.

Yet here may be a question; *How shall we know when to cease, and leave off mourning!* for the soul is a finite thing, and cannot dwell upon one action alwayes, because it hath many things to do; and therefore it cannot alwayes mourn, nor alwayes rejoyce.

Quest.

To this I answer, *That we have mourned enough, and discharged our duty sufficiently therein, when we have overcome our hearts, and brought them to a temper of mourning, and have complained before God, spread the ill of the times before him, and intreated pity from him; having poured out our souls in prayer, though short, yet effectual: when we have thus done, then we have discharged our duty in mourning:* and may turn to other occasions, as God doth require of us: for when we have mourned and wept, then we must look upon causes of rejoycing and thanksgiving. We must alwayes remember so to mourn and weep, that yet notwithstanding, looking upon Gods blessing upon us, both in Kingdom, State, and our own particular persons, we may be excited to thankfulness: for we must not alwayes be sullen; looking upon the evil, but casting our eyes upon the good things we do enjoy, we must provoke our selves to be thankful, even as men that have their eyes dazeled, will look upon some green colour to recover their sight again: so when we have wrought upon our souls, and brought them to mourn; then to help and raise them up, we ought to look upon causes of joy and thankfulness. We have cause of thankfulness, when we consider that many Churches in *France*, and other places, are invaded by enemies, oppressed with cruelty, and deprived of liberty; while yet we enjoy the liberty and free passage of the Gospel, being freed from the destruction of Warre and Pestilence, which devoureth so many, that it makes the Land to mourn. He continueth to us liberty to hear the word, and gives us many blessings, which others have not. Nay, we have cause to blesse God, for freeing us from that terriblest judgement of all judgements (which makes both Church and Common-wealth to mourn) because he doth not suffer us to fall into the hands of man, but takes us into his own hand to correct. It is Gods infinite mercy, that he doth not humble us by our enemies, but takes us into his own hand; therefore let us not provoke him, lest he give

Answ.

us up to the hands of our merciless enemies, which is a terrible judgement; we had better an hundred times meet him by repentance, and cast our selves into his hands, for then we have only to deal with a merciful God: but when we are to deal with merciless men that scorn the Gospel, then we have both God and them to deal with, which doubles our affliction.

Therefore, let us mourn, seeing we have cause, for our selves, and the estates of others: but yet let us be thankful; for if we would be more thankful for Gods benefits, we should have them longer continued. For, *as prayer begs blessing, so thanksgiving continues them*: as the best way to obtain good things, is prayer and mourning: so the best way to preserve them, is thanksgiving and rejoycing. So then we have plainly seen, that Christians should not alwayes be dumpish, and look sowerly, but they must as well rejoyce and be thankful, as mouru and weep.

Quest. 1.

But here, ere I proceed, I must answer some cases of conscience. As first, *What shall we say to those souls, that cannot weep for the sins and miseries of the Church, and therefore complain for the want of it?*

Secondly, *What shall we say to that soul that can weep, but more for outward, than for spiritual things?*

Sol.

Gen. 37. 34.

To the first I answer briefly, that we must not speak Fryer-like of teares, and never know from whence they come. But when we speak of weeping, we must alwayes understand, that teares are no further good, than when they spring from sorrow, and love within; than when they proceed from inward hatred to sin, and from fear and love to the Church of God. If this be in a man, the matter is not much for teares: there may be weeping without true sorrow, as there was in *Esau* for the blessing: and so the *Jewes*, they could weep and howle upon their beds, when there was a famine, yet there was no sound sorrow in them.

And on the contrary, there may be true sorrow without weeping: yea, and such may it be, that there can be no weeping, because their sorrow may be so great, that it is rather an astonishment than a weeping. In a fresh wound in the body, at the first there is not such pain felt, nor the blood seen, because the part is astonied only: so the soul for a time, may be in such an astonishment and grief, that there may be no expression of teares. Again, the soul doth follow the temperature of the body: some are of a more easie constitution to shed teares than others, so that there may be more grief, where there are fewest teares.

But to come to the question more directly; we ought to think our estates not so good as they should be, if we cannot at one time or other weep for the sins and miseries of the Church. If we can shed teares for outward things, at one time or other, and cannot weep for spiritual, it is a bad signe: for certainly, one time or other ordinarily, Gods children expresse their sorrow for their sins, and the estate of the Church by teares. They either have teares for spiritual respects, or else they mourn that they cannot mourn; grieve that they cannot grieve; and desire that they might mourn, and that they could weep; they wish with *Jeremy*, that their head were a fountain of teares; they wish they might

might have their bodies to answer the intent of their soul, that so they might largely expresse outwardly their inward grief; as *Jeremy* feared he should not have teares enough, therefore wished that his head were a fountain of teares; so they desire, Oh that I could mourn, and that I could weep!

But what shall we say to those that can weep more for other things? shall they be condemned for hypocrites?

I answer, no: for a torrent may run faster (for the present) than a continual current; so on the sudden, there may be teares and grief for outward things, but yet grief for sin is more, because of the continuance thereof: for sin is a continual cause of sorrow; whereas sorrow for outward things is but on a sudden, as it was in *David*, when he cryed, Oh my sonne *Absolom*, my sonne *Absolom*! What adoe is here on the sudden for *Absolom*? but yet he wept for his sins more, because that was a continual grief. So in a Christian, there may be some sudden passion, when he may seem to weep and grieve most for outward things, but yet his grief for sin, and the misery of the Church is more, because it is a continual grief.

Again, spiritual grief comes from spiritual causes. Teares for sin, and for the Church of God, do issue meerely from spiritual grounds: whereas in natural grief (for outward things) we have both the Spirit and Nature, that make us grieve: now when both these meet together, they carry the soul strongly as in a stream; so that there must needs be more teares and grief for outward things. As when the windows of heaven were opened from above, and the foundations below were broken up, there must needs follow a great flood: so when we have the Spirit from above, and our Nature below; there must of necessity be a grief for outward things. But yet in these cases, a little of spiritual sorrow is better than a great deal of natural; for *spiritual grief fatts the soul*. As the River *Nilus* runs through *Aegypt*, and fatts the Land: so this heavenly water of teares and grief, fattens the soul, and makes it fit for all holy services: they are both good; but one lesse than the other. Natural grief is allowable, which if a man have not, he is in a reprobate sense: for the Apostle reckons this up as a great sin; that in the latter dayes, men should be without natural affection. So then, we see, that for this reason also, there may be great store of grief and teares for outward things.

Again, let them grieve that they cannot more grieve, know, and comfort themselves, that they have the Spirit of God within them, which is an everlasting spring, that will in time overcome all carnal and worldly respects whatsoever, and make the heart in a fit temper of weeping, and grieving for spiritual respects.

Well, if this be thus, what shall we think of the jovial people of the world, who are so far from this sorrow, that (when a man shall come and ask them when they wept for their sins, when they did ever mourn, & send up sighs to God, for their swearing, lying, profanation of Gods Sabbath; for the wrong they have done to others, or for any of their

sins?) the time was never yet, wherein they ever shed a teare for sin, or had a sigh, groan, or mourning for sin. In what estate are we born in? all children of wrath, and heirs of damnation: but when got you out of this state? you have ever lived in jollity; therefore as yet you are as you were born, a childe of wrath. Do ye think to reap, and never sow? to reap in joy, and never sow in teares? God puts all his childrens teares in a bottle: but thou sparest God a labour, because thou never weepst. There are a company that ingrosse all jollity and mirth, as if they had no cause to weep; whose language yet when any man heares, and observes their courses and living in grosse sins; he may quickly judge, that they of all other have most cause to weep; though there be none more free from mourning, and though they seem to be the only men of the world. But I say to such, go weep, houl, and lament for your sins; for your peace is not yet made with God: therefore never rest till thou hast got an assurance from heaven, that thy sins are forgiven thee: Many people are angry, because Ministers tell them of this, but surely we must be damned if we do not.

Therefore as any would hope for comfort, and have God to wipe away their teares from them, in another world, let them work upon their hearts here, to shed teares for their own sins first, and then for the sins of the time; for their own first (I say) (for a man must first be good himself, before he can be good to others) and then let their grief extend to their brethren even beyond the seas, to the forelorn estate of the Church there.

Now the last thing that is noted in *Josiahs* weeping, is the sincerity of it; *Thou hast wept before me*, that is, sincerely before God: he sinned before him, and is humbled before him. There is nothing hid from his sight, not only open sins, but he knowes the very thoughts of our hearts: therefore let us weep before him without hypocrisie. No matter whether the world see it or no; but let us weep before God, as the Prophet saith. *Jer. 13. 17. My soul shall weep in secret for you, and mine eyes shall weep, and drop down teares in the night-season.* Let us weep in secret before God; for this is without hypocrisie. Now follows the issue of his weeping and humbling of himself.

I have even heard thee also, saith the Lord.

In which words is set down, Gods gracious acceptation of *Josiahs* humiliation; which was not without his special observation; *For I have even heard thee, saith the Lord*: so that it seemes *Josiah* did utter some words of grief, because God saith, *I have heard it*: and we may the rather think so, because usually Gods children do in their prayers adde words unto their teares; as *David* and good *Hezekiah* did; howsoever, then his prayer was not a distinct prayer, of a composed tenor of speech; yet it was a prayer, because that with these teares, he did send up sighs, and groans, and uttered broken words, from a broken heart. There was such a language in his heart, that God did understand, for God understands

understands the language of his own Spirit, in the hearts of his Children: the Spirit knowes what we mean, as *Rom. 8. 26, 27.* God hath an eare to hear our desires, our sighs and groans; for teares have the weight of a voyce, they speak for us. Where there is true grief, many times there cannot come a composed tenor of speech: for a broken heart expresseth it self more, in sighes, groans, and teares, than in words. Though we do not utter distinct words in a form of prayer; yet he heares our sighs and groans: his eares are open to the cries of his children; so we learn from hence for our comfort, against all Satans temptations;

That God takes a particular notice, and understands the prayers we make unto him: he heares the groans of his children. So *David* saith, *My groaning is not hid from thee:* so the Prophet sayes, *Psal. 145. 18, 19.* he will fulfil the desire of them that fear him; he will also hear their cry, and will save them: yea, he knowes our thoughts long before; This must needs be so.

Doct. 6.

First, *Because he is gracious vnd merciful,* he is a God hearing prayers.

Reason. 1.

Because of the Relations, which in his love he hath taken up himself; to be a Father: so that when a man shall by the spirit of adoption, call God Father, there is such a deal of eloquence, and rhetorick in this very word (it works so upon the bowels of God) that he cannot choose but hear: Even as a childe, when he speaks to his Father, and calls him by this name; this word *Father*, doth so work upon him, that he cannot but hear: so it is with God, when he heares us call him Father, he cannot but hear us.

Because of his Nature and love, which is above the love of an earthly Father: Though a Mother should forget, and not hear her child, yet the Lord will hear us.

3.

And likewise this is his promise; *Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will hear thee, and thou shalt glorifie me.*

Isa. 49. 15.

Again, God cannot basely esteem of our prayers, because *they are the motions of his own Spirit.* Oh, but they are broken prayers: It is true; but the Spirit understands them, and makes intercession for us, with sighes and groans that cannot be expressed; and none can understand them but the Spirit.

4.

5.

Object.

Sol.

Again, God cannot but hear our prayers, because *they are offered up in the name of a Mediator:* they are perfumed with the incense and sacrifice of his Sonne; therefore he cannot but hear them.

Rom. 8. 26.

6.

Again, God must needs hear our prayers, because *they are made according to his will:* when we pray for our selves, and for the Church of God, it is according to Gods will: so then, if we consider these respects, God cannot but hear our prayers.

7.

But some will object, *God doth not hear me: I have prayed a long while, and yet he hath not given me an answer.*

Object.

I answer, *God doth alwayes hear, though he seemeth not to hear;* sometimes to increase our importunity. Christ heard the woman of Canaan at first; but yet to increase her importunity, he gave her the repulse and denyall,

Answ. 1.

nyall, and with the same, inward strength to wastle with him.

2. Again; God seemes not to hear, *because he delights in the Musick of his Childrens Prayers*. Oh how he loves to hear the voyce of his Children! as a Father to hear the Language of his Childe, though it be none of the best: so it is sweet Musick in Gods eares, to hear the prayers of his children. He will have prayers to be cryes; therefore he defers to hear: but *in deferring he doth not defer, for he increaseth our strength*, (as in *Jacobs* wrastring) that we might cry after him, wastle with him, and offer violence unto him again.

3. And sometimes indeed he will not hear us, *because* (it may be) *there is some secret Achan in the Camp*, or some *Jonah* in the Ship; some sin (I mean) in the heart unrepented of: for in this case we may come before God, again and again, and he not hear us. This is the reason why God heares not many Christians; because they have not made a thorough inquisition into their own estates, found out their sins, and humbled themselves for it. Thus we see for what reasons God defers to hear our prayers.

Use 1.

If this be so, that God doth hear us; let us make this use, to be plentiful in prayers, and lay up a great store of them in the bosom of God; for this is that will do us the most good: he heares every one in due time, we do never lose a sigh, a teare, or any thing that is good (which proceeds from his own Spirit) but he will answer abundantly in his own time. For he that gives a desire, and prepares our heart to pray, and gives us a Mediator by whom to offer them up, will doubtless accept of them in his own Sonne, and will answer them. The time will come, when he will accept of nothing else, and we shall have no other thing to offer up: what a comfort will it then bee, that we have in former times, and can now call upon God? The day is comming, when goods will do us no good, but prayers will. What a comfort then is it to a Christian, that he hath a God to go to, that heares his prayers? Let all the World joyn together against a Christian, take away all things else, and cast him into a Dungeon; yet they cannot take away his God from him. What a happiness is it to pray? we can never be miserable, so long as we have the spirit of prayer: though we were in a Dungeon with *Jeremy*, or in the Whales belly with *Jonah*; yea, though in Hell, yet there we might have cause of comfort.

Let us therefore be ashamed of our barrenness in this duty, and observe whether God hear our prayers; or else how can we be thankful? there be many that pray, because their consciences do force them to some devotion; & therefore they slubber over a few prayers, that their consciences may not smite them; but they never observe the issue of their prayers, whether God heares them or not: whereas God is a God hearing prayers: & the childe of God doth esteeme of nothing, but that which he hath from God, as a fruit of prayer, & therefore accordingly, he doth return thanks: God will have his children begg all of him. As some Fathers will give nothing to their children, but they will have them first ask it of them: So God wil give us nothing, but what we pray for,

for. And though he doth exceed, to give us more than we aske, yet he looks that we should return thanks in some measure proportionable to the benefit received. Therefore let us observe how God heares our prayers, that so we may be suitably thankful. This will strengthen our faith in evil times, when we can thus plead with God; Hear Lord, heretofore I came before thee; though weakly, yet with a broken heart, and thou didst heare me, then; thou art still in God hearing prayer, therefore Lord look upon my estate now, and help me. Seeing then God heares our prayers, let us think of this glorious priviledge, that we have liberty to go to the throne of Grace, in all our wants: the whole world is not worth this one priviledge: we cannot command the Princes eare at all times: but we have a God alwayes to go to, that will heare us: what a wretched folly is it therefore of those, that by their sins bring themselves into such a condition, that they cannot have God to heare them.

But how shall we make such Prayers as God will heare? Quest.
Ans.

I answer first of all; Would we be in such an estate, that we may enjoy this blessed priviledge, to have Gods eare ready to heare.

First then, hear him. *If we will have God to hear us, then let us hear God, as Josiah did:* when he heard the word read, his heart melted: for he that turneth away his eares from hearing the Law, even his prayers shall be abominable, saith God. 1.
Prov. 28. 9.

And is it not good reason, think we, for God not to hear us, when we will not hear him? *Prov. 1. 24, 25.* Because I have called, and you have refused: when you are in misery, and shall out of self-love cry to me, to be delivered, then I will refuse to hear you, saith the Lord: Therefore let all prophane persons, that will not hear God, know a time will come, that though they cry and roar, yet he will not hear them.

Secondly, If we will have God hear our prayers, *they must proceed from a broken heart.* Prayers be the sacrifice of a broken spirit: *Josiah* had a tender and broken heart, and therefore God could not despise his prayers. So *David* pleads with God, *Psal. 51.* The sacrifice of God, is a broken and a contrite spirit. So holy *Bernard* saith, I have led a life unbecoming me; but yet my comfort is, that a broken heart, and a contrite spirit, Lord thou wilt not despise: God will hear the prayers and teares of relenting hearts. 2.

Thirdly, To strengthen our prayers, we must add to them the wings of *Love, Faith, Hope,* and *earnestness*; as *Josiah* did here: out of love to his Country, his prayers were joynd with weeping, and he wrestled with teares. O the prayers that have teares with them, cannot go without a blessing. 3.

Lastly, *If we would have God to hear us, let us have such a resolution & purpose of reformation, as Josiah had,* for his prayers were joynd with a purpose of reformation, which he afterwards performed in so strict a manner, that there was never such a reformation among all the Kings of *Judah*, as he made. To this purpose *David* saith, *Psal. 66. 18.* If I regard wickedness in my heart, God will not hear my prayer. If we have but a resolution to live in any sinful course, let us make as many prayers as we will, God will 4.

will not respect them. God regarded good *Josiah*, because he had no purpose to live in any sin against him.

If we come with a trayterous minde unto God, with our sins in our arms, we must look for no acceptation from him: When a man comes to a King, to put up a Petition unto him, and comes with a dagger in his hand to stab him, will the King accept of this mans Petition? So, do we think that God will hear our prayers, when we bring a dagger in our hand, to stab him with our sins? If we will not leave swearing, lying, pride, covetousness, and the like; if we have not covenanted with our own hearts, but still go on in sin, we shall never go away with a blessing: *Josiah* reformed himself, therefore God saith, *I have also heard thee*; Thus if our Prayers issue from a heart rightly affected (as good *Josiah* was,) then we shall speed as he did; for God did not only hear his Prayer, but see how he rewards him with an excellent blessing; to be taken home to heaven from the troubles of this life: which we shall in the next place speak of.

THE



THE SAINTS REFRESHING.

SERM. IV.

2 CHRON. 34. 28.

Behold, I will gather thee to thy Fathers, and thou shalt be gathered to thy grave in peace, neither shall thine eyes see all the evil that I will bring upon this place, and upon the Inhabitants of the same: so they brought the King word again.



Is, for the most part, the priviledge of a Christian, that his last dayes are his best: and though weeping be in the evening, yet joy comes in the morning: though he do begin in darkness, yet he ends in light. Whereas on the contrary, the wicked begin in jollity and light, but end in darkness; yea, such a darkness as is *utter darkness*; by *Peter* called *the blackness of darkness*: the preparations whereunto are, Gods outward judgements, in this life inflicted upon the impenitent and rebellious: wherein God many times puts a sensible, visible difference betwixt the godly and the wicked; as betwixt *Lot* and the *Sodomites*; *Noah* and the *adulterous world*; *Moses* and the *Israelites* with him, from *Korah*, *Dathan*, and his company; the *Egyptians* and the *Israelites* at the *Red Sea*: and in this Text, betwixt this good King and his People: He must not see all the evil that God was to bring upon his wicked and rebellious subjects. O the happines of holines! which is sure to speed well in all stormes whatsoever; because on all the glory there is a defence, as *Isaiah* speaks.

Mat. 8. 12.
2 Pet. 2. 17.
Isa. 4. 5.

Light

Num. 23 10. Light is sown for the righteous; and whatsoever his troubles be, yet his last end shall be blessed. Let me die (saith *Balaam*) the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his: such honour have all his Saints, such honour had this good King *Josiah*; being removed from hence, that he might not see the evil to come: though he were taken from earth, yet it was for his good; that he might be gathered into heaven, and make a royall exchange.

The words contain a promise of a reward, and great favour unto good King *Josiah*; *that he should dye, and be gathered unto his Fathers*: and that which is more (the manner considered) that he should dye in peace: the ground whereof is shewed unto him: *Because thine eyes shall not see all the evil that I will bring upon this place, and upon the Inhabitants of the same.* Gods promises are of three sorts. First, such as he made upon condition of *legal obedience*; Do this and thou shalt live.

Divers sorts of Promises.

- 1.
2. Secondly, when we are humbled upon sight of our sins, then he propounds another way, and promises, that if we will believe in Jesus Christ our Surety, who hath made satisfaction for us; then we shall live: this is the grand promise of all; the promise of life everlasting, and pardon of sin.
3. Thirdly, there are promises of encouragement unto us, when we are in the state of grace. As a Father, who meanes to make his Sonne an Heire, doth give him many promises of encouragement: so God deals with his children, when they are in the covenant of grace.

There are (I say) promises of particular reward, to encourage them, as they are sure of the main and great reward, (namely) *everlasting life*: Therefore *Josiah* being an Heir of Heaven, God did propound a promise of encouragement unto him, by way of favour, to shew that his good works were not unregarded. In general here,

Doct. 1. First, we may observe *Gods gracious dealing with his Children; that he takes notice of every good thing they do, and doth reward them for it*; yea in this life. There is not a sigh, but God heares it: not a teare, but he hath a bottle for it. Most men spare God a labour in this kinde; he promiseth to wipe away all teares from our eyes, but they will shed none: yet the least tear shed, and word spoken in a good cause, goes not without a reward from God; not so much as a cup of cold water, but he rewards. Which must needs be so.

Rev. 21. 4.

Reason. Because God looks upon the good things we do (being his own works in us) as upon lovely objects, with a love unto them: for though *Josiah* had said nothing, yet his deep humiliation it self, was as it were a prayer, that cryed strongly in the eares of God, that he could not but reward it. So that partly because God looks upon us, as lovely objects, he loving the work of his own Spirit; and partly, because they cry unto God (as it were) and pluck down a blessing from Heaven, they cannot go unrewarded.

Viz. This is matter of comfort, that God will not only reward us with heaven, but will also recompence every good thing we do, even in this world: yea, such is his bounty, he rewards hypocrites. Because he will not be beholding to them for any good thing they do, nor have them dye

dye unrewarded; he recompenseth them with some outward favours, which is all they desire. *Ahab* did but act counterfeited humiliation and he was rewarded for it: so the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* did many good things, and had that they looked for: they looked not for heaven, but for the praise of men; this they had, as Christ tells them; *Verily I say unto you, you have your reward.* God will be beholding to none; but whosoever do any thing that is good, they shall have some reward, whether they be good or bad. If the conscience of a man did judge well, he might come to God with boldness, (not to brag of good works, but out of an humble heart) saying, Remember me O Lord as I have dealt with thee. So good *Hezekiah* did; Remember Lord, how I have walked before thee in truth. When we labour in all our actions to please God, we may with boldness approach to the Throne of Grace; and say with *Peter*, Remember Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. If there were no other reward but this; that we have a priviledge to go to God, with boldness, (our conscience not accusing us) it were enough. What a shame is it then, that we should be so barren in good works, seeing our labour shall not be unrewarded of the Lord. Oh then let us take the counsel of the Apostle: *Finally my Brethren, be ye steadfast and unmoveable, abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.* He hath a reward for every cup of cold water, for every teare: every good deed we do, hath the force of a prayer, to begg a blessing; yea, our very teares speak loud to God, although we say nothing: But to come to particulars.

Behold I will gather thee to thy Fathers, &c.

Here we see this world, *behold* (a word serving to stir up attention) set before the promise; which was formerly set before a threatening, *Behold I will bring evil upon this place, &c.* *Behold* is as necessary before promises; as threatnings. For the soul is ready to behold that which is evil, and by nature is prone to dejection, and to cast down it self, therefore there need be a *Behold*, put before the promise, to raise up the dejected soul of *Josiah*, or others, and all little enough. Christians should have two eyes, one to look upon the ill, the other upon the good, and the grace of God that is in them, that so they may be thankful. But they for the most part, look only upon the ill that is in them, and so God wants his glory, and we our comfort.

Behold I will gather thee to thy Fathers, and thou shalt be gathered to thy grave in peace.

Mark here the language of *Canaan*, how the Spirit of God in common matters, doth raise up the soul to think highly of them.

Therefore it is, that the Ghost sweetens death with a phrase of gathering: instead of saying thou shalt die, he saith, *Thou shalt be gathered.* How many phrases have we in Scripture, that have comfort wrapt in

What is here
meant by a
peaceable
death.

them? as there is in this phrase, *Thou shalt be gathered to thy grave in peace*, I will not speak how many wayes peace is taken in Scripture, *Thou shalt die in peace*; that is, thou shalt die *quietly, honourably, and peaceably*. And thou shalt not see the misery that I will bring upon the state and kingdom. Thou shalt be gathered to thy fathers, which is meant to *Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*, and to all the faithful Patriarks.

Doff. 3. Only observe: It is a very sweet word, and imports unto us, *That death is nothing but a gathering; and presupposeth that Gods Children are all scattered in this world amongst wicked men*, in a forlorn place, where they are used untowardly, as Pilgrims use to be in a strange land. Therefore we had need be gathered, and it is a comfort to be gathered: but from whence shall he be gathered? he shall be gathered from a wicked, confused world: and to whom shall he go? *To his Father*: his soul shall go to their souls, his body shall be laid in the grave with theirs: As if he had said; Thou shalt leave some company, but go to better; thou shalt leave a Kingly estate, but thou shalt go to a better Kingdom.

Doff. 4. *The changes of Gods Children are for the better, death to them is but a gathering*: This gathering doth shew, the preciousness of the thing gathered: for God doth not use to gather things of no value. *Josiah* was a Pearl worth the gathering; he was one of high esteem, very precious: so every Christian is dearly bought with the blood of Christ, therefore God will not suffer him to perish, but will gather him before the evil dayes come. As men use to gather Jewels, before fire comes into their houses: or as Husband-men will be sure to gather their Corn, before they will let the beasts come into the field: so saith God to him, I will be sure to gather thee, before I bring destruction upon the Land. We are all by nature lost in *Adam*, and scattered from God; therefore we must be gathered again in Christ; for all gathering that is good, is in him: for he is the Head of all union that is good. And this is to be wrought by the Ordinances of God, by the meanes of the Ministry, which is appointed unto that end, to gather us, as *Matth. 23. 37*. Christ speaks to *Hierusalem*: How often would I have gathered you together, as a Henne gathereth her Chickens under her wings, but you would not? Christ would have gathered them unto himself, by his word, but they refused.

1 The. 4. 17. All the gathering of a Christian in this life, is a gathering to Christ by faith, and to the communion of Saints by love: and the more he doth grow in grace, the more neere Communion he hath with Christ: Then after this gathering by grace, there comes by death a gathering to Christ in glory. For the soul goes for ever and ever to be with the Lord: after this, comes a higher degree of gathering at the day of Judgement; when there shall be a great meeting of all Saints, and the soul and body shall be re-united together, to remain for ever with the Lord. Let us then think of this; that whatsoever befalls us in the world, we shall be sure to be gathered; for *Death is but a gathering*. For from whence goes *Josiah*? from a sinful world, a sinful state, a wretched people, unto his fathers, who are all good, nay, to God his Father. We are all here as *Daniel* in the Lyons Den, as Sheep among Wolves; but at death we shall be

be gathered to our fathers: It is a gathering to a better place, to heaven; and to better Persons, to fathers; where we shall be for ever praying the Lord, never offending him, loving and pleasing one another. Here Christians displease one another, and cannot be gathered together in love and affection: but there they shall be gathered in unity of love for ever.

This serves, first of all, to comfort us in departure of friends; to render their souls up with comfort into the hands of God: we know they are not lost, but sent before us; we shall be gathered to them, they cannot come to us: therefore why should we grieve? they are gathered in quietness, and rest to their fathers. This should also make us render our souls to God, as into the hands of a faithful Creator and Redeemer. From whence go we? from a sinful world, and place of tears, to a place of happiness above expression. Why should we be afraid of death? it is but a gathering to our Fathers. What a comfort is it to us in this world, that we shall go to a place where all is good, where we shall be perfectly renewed, made in the Image of God, and shall have nothing defaced? Let this raise up our dead and drowsie souls: thus we shall be one day gathered: the wicked shall be gathered together, but a woful gathering is it; they shall be gathered like a bundle of Tares, to be thrown into hell, there for ever to burn. They are dross and chaffe, never gathered to Christ by faith, nor to the body of the Church by love: and therefore they are as dross and chaffe, which the winde scatters here, and shall for ever be scattered hereafter. They are (as Cain) Vagabonds in regard of the life of grace here; and therefore shall be for ever scattered from the life of glory hereafter. They shall be gathered to those whom they delighted in, and kept company with whilest they were in this world. They loved to keep company with the wicked here, therefore they shall be gathered to them in hell, hereafter. This is sure, thou shalt live in heaven, or hell afterwards, with those whom thou livedst with here. Dost thou live, only delighted in evil company now? It is pity thou shouldst be severed from them hereafter. If thou be gathered to them in love and affection here, thou shalt be gathered to them in hell and destruction hereafter. It is a comfortable evidence to those that delight in good company, that they shall be with them in heaven for ever: *Hereby we know, that we are translated from death to life, because we love the brethren.* And on the contrary, those that are brethren in evil here, may read in their own wicked courses and conversation, what will become of them hereafter: they are all Tares, and shall be gathered together in a bundle, and cast into hell fire for ever.

And thou shalt be gathered to thy grave in peace.

Here is a Reward; not only to dye, but to dye in peace. *Josiah* goes the way of all flesh: he must dye though he be a King. This statute binds all: *All are lyable to death. And thou shalt be gathered, or put in thy grave in peace:* this doth declare that he should be buried: the ground whereof

Vse.

Death what.

Psal. 1. 4.

1 Ioh. 3. 14.

is out of *Gen. 3. 19. Dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return* : from earth we came, and to earth we shall return : The earth we carry, and the earth we tread on shall both meet together. In that God doth here promise it to *Josiah* as a blessing, we may hence learn, *That buriall is a comely and honourable thing* ; and that we ought to have a respect unto it, partly because the body of a dead Christian is a precious thing. They are Temples of the holy Ghost, members of Christ, and therefore ought to have the honour of burial : partly because it shewes our love and affection to the party buried ; for it is the last kindness we can do unto them. Again, we ought to have respect to burial, to shew our hope of the Resurrection ; that though the body be cast into the earth, yet it shall rise : though it be sown in dishonour, yet it shall rise in honour. So we see, that for these reasons, buriall is honourable ; therefore it is said of the *faithful* in Scripture, that they were buried, to shew how honourable a thing it is : and indeed it is an honour ; specially for fathers, to be buried by their friends and Children, and carried by them into their graves : For to be buried like a beast, is a judgement to wicked men.

Quest.

But what then shall we say to all those that are not thus buried? whose bodies are given to be torn by wilde beasts, or burnt to ashes, or slung into Rivers, as Antichrist useth to deal with many Saints,

Ans.

I answer, that in this case faith must raise it self above difficulty: for though it be a favour, and a blessing of God, to have Christian buriall after we are dead, yet Christians must be content to go without this blessing sometimes, when God calls them to the contrary, as when we cannot have it upon good termes, with peace of conscience, or with Gods love ; in this case, a buriall in regard of Gods favour, is not worth the naming. Therefore let all Christians be content to put their bodies, life and all, to hazard : not only to be willing to want buriall, when we are dead ; but to sacrifice our lives, and whatsoever else for God, as many Saints have been martyred, and their bodies burnt to ashes. Yet God will gather together the ashes of the dead bodies of his Children : for, *Right precious in the sight of the Lord, is the death of his Saints*. And is it not better to want this with Gods favour, than to have the most honourable buriall in the world on evil termes ? for what faith the Spirit of God ? Happy and blessed are they which dye in the Lord : not happy are they which dye in Pompe, and are buried in state ; but happy are they that dye in the Lord : Therefore when we may not have it (although it be a comely thing) yet we have God and Christ, we have all that is good. Therefore it is no matter what becomes of our bodies after we are dead : for though we be slung into the Sea, burnt to ashes ; yet both Sea, and earth must give up all the dead, as it is, *Revel. 20. 13*. Therefore as for our bodies, let us be willing that God may have them, who gave them : and if he will have us to sacrifice our lives for him, let us do it willingly.

Psal. 116. 15.

And thou shalt be gathered to thy grave in peace.

Obj.

How is this ? for we read in the succeeding Chapter of *Josiah*, that he died

died a violent death; he was slain by the hands of his enemies; is this to dye in peace?

I answer, the next words do expound it: *He dyed in peace, because his eyes should not see the evil that God would bring upon the Land afterwards*; as if he had said, Thou shalt not see the ruine of the Church, and Common-wealth: so though *Iosiah* were slain by Idolaters; by *Pharaoh* and his Chariots: yet *he died in peace comparatively with a worse state of life*. For though he died a bloody death by the hands of his enemies; yet he died in peace, because he was prevented by death, from seeing that which was worse then death. For God may reserve a man in this life, to worse miseries than death it self.

Sol.

From hence we learn this instruction: *That death may be lesse miserable then the ill which a man may live to see in this life*: or, *That the miseries of this life may be such, as that death may be much better then life, and far rather to be chosen*. We may fall into such miseries whilst we do live, that we may desire death, *they being greater then it*. The reason hereof is, because that a sudden death in some respects, is better then a lingring one: one death is better then many deaths; for how many deaths did *Iosiah* escape by this one death? It would have been a death to him, if he had lived to see the ruine of the Common-wealth, the Church of God, and his own sonnes carried into captivity; to have seen them slain, their eyes plucked out; the Temple of God plucked down, and Idolatry set up.

Doct. 3.

Reason.

We ought then to be careful; how to avoid a cursed and miserable estate after death: all the care of wicked men is to avoid death; but they may fall into such an estate in this life, that they may wish death, as an heathen Emperour once did, who complaining, said; *I have none will do me so much favour, as to kill me*. All the desire of Atheists, is, that they may live: thou base Atheist; thou mayst fall into such an estate, as is worse then death: and if that be so terrible, what will that estate be after death? An Atheist in this life desires life, Oh that I might not dye! but in hell thou wilt desire, Oh that I might dye! the time will come, that thou shalt desire that which thou canst not abide to hear of now. What desperate folly is it therefore to redeem life with base conditions? not to give it for the Gospel, when we are called to it? In this case, that base life which we so stand upon, will cost us the losse of our soul for ever in hell, when we shall desire to dye.

Behold, I will gather thee to thy fathers, and thou shalt be put in thy grave in peace: The Lord saith, *he will gather*: so we see, *our times are in Gods hand*; as *David* saith, *My time is in thy hand*. Our times of coming into the world, continuing in it, and going out of it, are in Gods hand: therefore he saith, Thou shalt be put in thy grave in peace; God hath power of death. Our going and coming is from God, he is the Lord of life and death.

Doct. 6.
Plaine.

This is a comfort unto us, while we live in this world; that whilst we live, we are not in our own hands; we shall not die in our own time: neither is it in our enemies hands, but in Gods hand: he hath appointed a cer-

Y/s.

tain time of our being here in this world. This should tie us to obedience, and to dye in Hope and Faith; Because when we die, we are but gathered to our fathers, to better company and place than we leave behind us.

Again we see here, *That men may out-live their own happiness*: that at last, life may be a Judgement unto them; because they may see that which is worse than death. How many Parents live to see the ruine of their own families? the undoing of their Children, by their own miscarriage? we see God takes away *Iosiah*, because he will not have him live (as it were) beyond his happiness. We see how tenderly affected God is for the good of his Children: he pities them when they are in misery, knowes what they are able to bear, and will lay no more upon them, than he gives them strength to endure. God knew that *Iosiah* was tender-hearted, and melted at the very threatnings: which if he could not endure to hear against his Countrey, could he ever have endured to have seen the miseries upon his people and Countrey? surely no: therefore God will rather gather him to his fathers.

Note.

Now this is a wonderful comfort, that many times God will not let us see to o great matter of grief: Let us then imitate God, and deal so one with another, as God deales with us; the Husband with the Wife, and the Wife with the Husband, and the like. Let us not acquaint them with such things, as may make them more grieve than is fitting, or they are able to bear: God would not have *Iosiah* to see the misery he brought upon his Countrey, because he knew that he was tenderly disposed; that a little grief would soon overcome him: so let us beware of causing any to grieve, or to let them know things which they are not able to beare.

Again, seeing this is a grief to a kind and loving father, yea worse than death, to see the ruine of his Childe; this should teach all those that are young, to take care that they give no occasion of offence to those that are over them, for to grieve, which will be worse than death unto them. It would have been worse than a death unto *Iosiah*, to have seen the ruine of his children: so for those children which have been cherished by their Parents, in their non-age; it will be worse than death, to them in their age, to see their children lewd, and come to ruine, whereby they bring so much sooner, the gray-head of their Father, to the grave in sorrow. These offend against the sixth Commandement, which saith, *Thou shalt not kill*. Let us then rather revive and comfort the heart of those that have been good unto us, and not kill them, or do that which is worse than death unto them.

Neither shalt thy eyes see the misery, I will bring upon this people.

Doct. 7.

Here we learn again, *That it is the sight of misery which works the deepest impression*. It is not the hearing of a thing, but the sight of it, which affecteth most deeply; As in the *Sacrament*, the seeing of the bread broken, and the Wine poured out, works a deep impression: and because God knew *Josiah's* heart would break at the sight of the misery, therefore he tells him; *Thine eyes shall not see the evil that I will bring upon this*

this place. The sight is a most working sense, to make the deepest impression upon the soul: what shall be our great joy and happiness in heaven, but that we shall see God for evermore? sight is a blessing upon earth; both the eyes of the body wherewith we see; and the eyes of the soul, that is, *Faith*, which makes us see God a farre off, till in heaven we shall see him face to face: so that sight makes us both happy and miserable.

How wretched then, is the estate of them, that shall see themselves (with their own wicked eyes) sent to hell, with the creature they delighted in; that which the eyes see, the heart feels. There are many Atheists, whose whole care is, to preserve life: they would live, although they live the life of a Dogge: but the time will come, that thou wilt more earnestly desire death, than life: thy eye shall see, and thy body feel, and thy conscience too, that which is worse than a thousand deaths; thou shalt then dye a living death. The worm of thy conscience shall gnaw thee for ever, and shalt see and feel the tormenting fire which shall never be quenched. That which the wicked nourish now to follow their humour, never caring to please God, the day will be, when they shall desire to avoid it; and that which they labour to avoid most now, the time will come when they shall most desire it: Death is the King of feares; it is terrible: but then look beyond death, what is behinde that: thou shalt see at the heeles of it, hell and eternal damnation.

This should teach us also how to understand the promise of long life: It is a promise, and a favour of God, to be desired; It is a prayer with condition; if God see it good: else God may give us long life, to see and feel a world of misery. Therefore such promises are to be desired conditionally, if God see it good for us.

Again, the holy Ghost saith here, (*Thy eyes shall not see the evil I will bring upon this place.*) Hence we learn, *That, those which be dead in the Lord, are freed from seeing of any evil or misery:* the godly shall see no misery after death. If this be so, then they do not go into Purgatory after death, as the Popists hold. The holy Ghost saith, *Josiah* is taken away, from seeing any evil to come: then sure they do not fall into such misery after death, which is worse than death. True say the Papists, such excellent men as *Josiah* do go to heaven immediately: I, but the holy Ghost saith by *Isaiah* 57. 1. that the righteous are taken away from the evil to come. It is spoken of the whole generation of righteous men; therefore, it is a sottish thing, for them to hold, that any of them shall see Purgatory; when God saith, the righteous are taken away, from seeing any evil to come.

And as it is against them in this: so here is another conclusion against Popery, that takes away their invocation of Saints: for, *the righteous go to heaven & cannot see or know our wants, and miseries:* yea, they are taken away, because they should not see the miserable estate that befalls their posterity; then if they do not know our wants, how can they hear and help us, when we pray? seeing it is a part of their happiness, not to understand our miseries: for if *Josiah* from heaven could have seen the

Use 1.

Use 2.

Object.
Solut.

Diss. 9.

desolation & misery that befell his Country afterwards, it would have wrought upon him: but *Josiah* was taken away; that he should not see it. Therefore why should men spend that blessed incense and sacrifice of prayer, unto those that cannot hear; but put case, they could hear some; yet can they hear all that pray unto them? *A finite creature, hath but a finite act, and limited power.* How can one Saint give a distinct answer and help to (perhaps) a thousand prayers? as the Virgin *Mary* hath many thousand prayers offered her; how can she distinctly know, and give a distinct answer to every prayer?

Thou shalt be put in thy grave in peace, neither shall thy eyes see all the evil, that I will bring upon this place. Let us learn here a mystery of divine providence, not only in great matters; as *Election* and *Predestination*; but in ordering of the common things of the world. How many excellent mysteries are here wrapt together in this death of *Josiah*? As first, it is said, that he died in peace; whereas he dyed a violent death, and was slain by the hands of his enemies: *his death was both a mercy and a correction*; a correction for his error, in being so hasty in going to Warre with *Pharaoh* King of *Egypt*, and yet it was a mercy, because it prevented him from seeing the evil to come, and so likewise brought him sooner to Heaven. It is a strange thing to see, how the wisdom of heaven can mingle crosses and favours, corrections and mercies together; that the same thing should be both a mercy to *Josiah*, to be taken away; and yet a correction also for his error, in going to fight against *Necho*, King of *Egypt*, as we see *2 Chron. 35. 23.* We may have mercies and afflictions upon us, at the same time, as God by the same death corrected *Josiah* folly, and rewarded his humility.

First mystery
in *Josiah*'s
death.

Second My-
stery.

Mark here again another mystery; in the carriage of divine Providence; how he brings his promises to passe strangely above the reach of man: as here he having promised *Josiah*, that he should die in peace, one would have thought, that *Josiah* should have dyed in pomp and state; no, thou shalt dye in peace, although thou be slain by the hand of thy enemies; thou shalt come to heaven, although it be by a strange way. Thus God brings his children to heaven, by strange wayes, yea, by contrary wayes, afflictions and persecutions: *Paul* knew he should come to *Rome*, although it were by a strange way, though he suffered shipwrack, and was in great danger, as we may see, *Acts 27.* God hath strange wayes to bring his counsels to passe, which he doth so strangely, as we may see his own hand in it.

Third My-
stery.

Again, here we may see another mystery in divine Providence, concerning the death of *Josiah*; in that he was taken away being a young man, but 39 yeares old, who was the flower of his Kingdom, and one upon whom the flourishing estate of such a Kingdom did depend: Now for such a gracious Prince, to be taken away in such a time, and at such an age, when he might have done much good; A man would hardly believe this mystery in divine Providence; but *our times are in Gods hand, his time is better then ours.* & therefore he seeing the sins of the people, to be so great, that he could not bear with them longer, (for it was the

sins

sins of the people, that deprived them of *Josiah*.) It was not the King of *Egypt*, who was the cause of his death, but the sins of the Land, those caused God to make this way, to take away their gracious King.

Here we may admire the wisdom of God, who doth not give an account unto us of his doings, why he suffers some to live, and takes away others: why he suffers the wicked to live, and takes away his own, we can give little reason for it, because it is a mystery, but God best knoweth the time when to reap his own corn.

V/s.

Neither shall thy eyes see all the evil, I will bring upon this place, and upon the Inhabitants of the Land.

Here the holy Ghost doth insinuate unto us, that whilest *Josiah* was alive, God would not bring this Judgement upon the Land, but after his death, then it should come upon them: so here we learn this comfortable point of instruction, That *the lives of Gods children, do keep back Judgement and evil from the place where they live; and their death is a fore-runner of Judgement*: their life keeps back ill, and their death plucks down ill. While thou art alive, I will bring no evil upon this place, but when thou art gone, then I will bring it down, saith God. The reasons of this are:

Doct. 10.

Because, *gracious men do make the times and the places good where they live*: It is a world of good that is done by their example and help: while they live, the times are the better for them.

Reason. 1:

And again, *they keep back ill; because gracious men do binde good by their prayers*: they force (as it were) a necessity upon God, that he must let the world alone, they binde his hands, that he will do nothing while they are in it: as to *Lot* in *Sodom*, *I can do nothing while thou art gone, saith the Angel*. They stand in the gap, and keep God from pouring down the vials of his wrath: but when they are gone, there is nothing to hinder, or stop the current of divine Justice, but that it must needs have his course. As when men have gathered their corn into their Barns, then let their beasts, or whatsoever else go into the field, they care not; and as when the Jewels are taken out of a rotten house, though the fire then seize upon it, men regard not: So when Gods Jewels are gathered to himself, then woe to the wicked world; for then God will break forth in wrath upon them: Woe to the old World, when *Noah* goes into the Arke; for then followes the Flood: woe to *Sodom*, when *Lot* goes out of it, for then it is sure to be burnt. *Luther* prayed that God would not bring Warre upon the people in *Germany* all his time; but when he dyed, the whole Land was overspread with Warre: So before the destruction of *Ierusalem*, God did gather the Christians to a little City, called *Pella*, neere *Ierusalem*: then came *Titus* and *Vespasian*, and ruined the City of *Ierusalem*. So there are many gracious Parents that dye, after whose death comes some miserable end to their wicked Children, but not before. God takes away the Parents out of the world, that they might not see the ruine of their children. So then we see, that it is cleere, that good men keep back judgement from the places where they live.

2.

Gen. 19. 24.

What

Use 1.

Gen. 30. 27.
Gen. 39. 23.

What should we learn from hence? *this should teach us to make much of such men, as truly fear God*; seeing it is for their sakes, that God doth spare us: they carry the blessing of God with them, wheresoever they go; as *Labans* house was blest for *Jacobs* sake, and *Potiphers* for *Josephs* sake; so the wicked are spared, and fare the better, for the Saints who live among them. But what is the common course of wicked men? to hate such, with a deadly hatred above all others; because their lives and speeches, do discover the wickedness of theirs, and because they tell them the truth, and reprove them.

Therefore it was, that *Abah* could not endure the sight of *Micaiah*, that holy Prophet, who without flattery, spake down-right truth. So it is now beyond Seas, and elsewhere; they labour to root out all the good men: but what will they get by it? surely it will be a thousand times worse with them, than it is: for if they were out, then wo to the Land presently.

Use 2.

This should also teach us to pray to God, to blesse those that are good. Is it not good for us, to uphold those pillars whereby we stand? what madness is it for a man to labour to pull down the Pillar whereby he is holden alive? as *Sampson* pulling down the Pillars of the House, brought death upon himself; so godly men (the Pillars of this tottering world, which uphold the places where they live) being once shaken, all the whole state falls. Therefore let us not be enemies to our own good, to hate the godly, for it is for their sakes, the Lord shewes mercy to us, and refrains to poure out his judgement upon the wicked world. And when the best gathering of all gatherings shall come, that the Elect of God shall be gathered together, then comes the misery of all miseries to the wicked. So we see, this point is cleare, that the godly, while they are alive, keep back ill, and bring much good: For doth God continue the world for wicked men? surely no. For what glory and honour hath God from such wicked wretches? do they not swear, lie, live filthily, and abuse his members? Is it for these, that God doth continue the world? surely no: but for the godlies sake, are judgements deferred, and the world is continued.

Use 3.

If this be thus, well may we lament the death of those that are good: for when they are gone, our safety is gone, *they are the Chariots and Horsemen of Israel*; therefore well may we bewaile their losse; well might *Jeremy* lament for the death of *Josiah*, for together with the breath of *Josiah*, the life of that state breathed out together with him, the flourishing condition of *Ierusalem* dyed, and lay buried with him as it were in the same grave.

See here again, how God correcteth too much resting on the arm of flesh: they blessed themselves under *Josiah*, as if no evil should come near them, as appeares, *Lament. 4. 20. The breath of our Nostrils, the Anointed of the Lord was taken in their pits, of whom we said, under his shadow we shall live.* There is no greater wrong to our selves, and to others on whom we rest so much, than to secure our selves so much on them, as to neglect serious turning to God.

Neither

Neither shall thy eyes see all the evill I will bring upon this place.

This is the ground, why he should dye in peace, *because he shall not see all the evil I will bring upon this place.* Here we see, that the judgement which God threatned to bring upon the Church and Commonwealth is set down, by this word *evill*, Thine eyes shall not see all the evil I will bring upon this place. But who sends this evil? It is an evill brought by God. Thou shalt not see the evill *I will bring*, &c. It was not God that brought it properly, but *Nebuchadnezzar*, who carried his sonnes into captivity: howsoever, God had a hand in it: for is there any evill in the City, and God hath not done it? saith the Prophet *Amos*: Amos 3. 6.
But we must distinguish between evill: there is,

1. *The evill of sinne,*
And
2. *The evill of punishment.*

First, *The evil of sin*, and this God doth not bring: for it is hateful unto him. Then the *evill of punishment*, which is two fold.

1. Either that which comes immediately from God, as *Famine, Pestilence*, or the like: in which punishments we are to deal with God alone.

2. Or else, *The evill that comes from God, but by men*, which he useth as Instruments to punish us, and this is by Warre and cruel usage.

Now this *Josiah* is taken away from this greatest evil we can suffer in this life; to have God correct us by the hands of men: for when we have to deal with God, the labour is easier to prevail with him, as *David* did, 2 *Sam.* 24. 14. But when we have to deal with merciless men, then we have to deale with the poysoned malice of men, besides Gods anger. Now the evil that comes from God, is chiefly,

The ill which seizeth upon the soul after death:

Or else, *The evil which seizeth upon the whole man, both soul and body, both in this, and after this life.*

Thus God is said to bring evil; not the evil of sin, but the evil of punishment.

Hence we learn, that *The evils which suffer, they are from the evil of sin.* It is sin that makes God to bring evil upon the Creature; If we look upward to God, there is no evil in the world, for in that consideration, all things are good so far as he hath a hand in them. Therefore, whatsoever the creature suffers, it comes from the meritorious evil, the evil of sin. It comes from God, but through the evil of sin provoking him. Doct. 11.

If any man aske, how can God, which is good, bring that which is evil?

I answer, we must know, that *The evil of punishment, is the good of justice.* All the evil that he doth, is good, as it comes from him in his Justice punishing, because it doth good to them that are punished, either to cause them return, or if they will not, to shew the glory of his Justice, in condemning them. It is the good of Justice, & it is not alwayes in God
only

*Quest.
Sol.*

only permitting or suffering such a thing for to be done; but it is in him as an act, having a hand in it. Therefore God saith, *Ashur is the rod of my wrath*: so that in all punishments, God hath a hand, whether it be upon the body or soul.

Vse.

This serves for *direction* unto us, to begin where we should begin; in all our afflictions to go to Heaven, and make our peace with God, and not go to secondary causes: for all evil of punishment comes from him. Let us, if we fear evil, make our peace with God, by Repentance, and new Obedience; and then he will over-rule all secondary causes, so as to help us: Go not in this case to the Jaylor, or to the Executioner, but go to the Judge. Let us make our peace in Heaven first, and then there will be soon a command for our ease. Yea, Christ can command the wind, and Sea to be still, the Devil himself to be quiet, if our peace be made with him.

2 Sam. 16. 11.

Job 1. 21.

Object.

Sol.

Therefore let us learn this lesson, and not fret against the instrument whereby God useth to correct us. David had learned thus much when Shimei railed upon him: *It is God that hath bid him, therefore let him alone*. So holy Job saith, *It is God that gives, and God that takes away*. He doth not only say, God gives, but God takes away. O but it was the Chaldeans that took it away. I, but it is no matter for that, God gave them leave. Therefore let us carry our selves patiently in all troubles, submitting our selves under the mighty hand of God, from whom we have all evil of punishment.

Object.

Again, here we have another mystery of Divine providence. For it may be objected; What, will God bring evil upon his own Church and people? upon the Temple and place, where his Name is called upon, and that by Idolaters? Where is Divine Justice now?

Solnt.

I answer, Hold thy peace, take not the ballance out of Gods hand, he knowes what is better for us than we our selves: we must not call God to our barre: for we shall all appear before his God useth servants and slaves to correct his Sonnes; worse men than his people, to correct his people: it is his course so to do, when they of his own sin against him. For evil men many times, make evil men good, when they are used as instruments to correct them: as here God useth wicked men to make his children good. So God makes a Rod of Ashur, to make his evil children better. He useth slaves to correct his sons, because it is too base a service for the Angels, or good men to do, therefore he useth the devil and his Instruments to do it. Wherefore let us not call into question Gods providence; for when he will punish his people, he can hisse for a worse people; for Egypt, or Ashur, or the like; so if he will punish England, he can hisse again for the Danes, or Normans, to punish his own people. Let us not boast we are Gods people, and they Idolaters: no, God can hisse for a baser people, to punish his own Servants. It is the will of God so to dispose, and the will of God is, *Summa Justitia*, the height of Justice: God will have it so, let us make our peace with him, and not demand why he doth thus and thus.

[And so they brought the King word again.] I will but touch this in a word; and so make an end.

Here

Here we see, that the Messengers deal faithfully with *Josiah*: they brought the direct message which the Prophetesse did bid them, which was good for himself, but doleful for his estate: He was a gracious man, and God gave him gracious Servants; For God will give good *Doff. 12.* men faithful servants, that shall deal faithfully with them. As for the wicked, God will give them such servants, that shall humour them to their own ruine. If they have a heart not desirous to hear the truth, if they be *Ahabs*, they shall have four hundred false Prophets to lead them in a course to their own ruine. But *Josiah* had an upright heart, desiring to know the truth, therefore God gave him a faithful Prophetesse to deal truly with him, and faithful messengers to bring the true answer.

29. *Then the King sent and gathered together all the Elders of Judah and Jerusalem.*

30. *And the King went up into the House of the Lord, and all the men of Judah, and the Inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the Priests, and the Levites, and all the people great and small, &c.*

Which words shew, what good King *Josiah* did upon the receipt of this message: As soon as ever he heard it, he did not suffer it to cool upon him: but when his spirit was stirred up, he did as a gracious King should do, he sent and gathered all the Elders of *Judah*, and the Inhabitants of *Jerusalem*, both great and small, and they went up to the house of the Lord, and there read in their eares, all the words of the book of the Covenant, which was found in the house of the Lord.

Here first we see, that *Josiah* gathered as it were a Parliament and a Council: as also, in both *Josiah* and the people, we may behold an excellent and sweet harmony of State, when all, both King and Priests, Levites and People, did meet amiably together. This was an excellent time, when there was such an harmony between King and People, that he no sooner commands, but they obeyed him.

But more particularly we learn, that *The care of the Common-wealth, Doff. 13. and of the Church, is a duty belonging to the King*: That the Reformation both of Church and Common-wealth, belongs unto the Prince. There is a generation, which think that the King must onely take care for the *Common-wealth*; but they have also power to look to Religion. We see *Josiah* doth it, he is the keeper of both. *Josiah* hath a care of Religion, and it doth come in his place: he is a head, and it is besitting his Relation: he is a father, not only to look to the temporal State, but to the Church.

The *Donatists* in *Augustines* time, did ask, what had the Emperour to do with the Church? But it was answered, That the Emperour could not rule the Common-wealth, except he governed the Church: for the Church is a Common-wealth. So that we see, as a chief right; the ordering of the matters of Religion, belongs to the care of the Prince. But there are two things in Religion: First, intrinsecal within the Church, as to Preach, Administer the Sacraments, & Ordain Ministers; these he ought not to do: but for those things that are without it, those belong unto him. If any of those that are placed in Church or Common-wealth;

do not their duty, it is fitting for him to correct: he ought to set all agoing without, and to reform abuses, but not to meddle with the things within the Church aforesaid, as to execute the same, but to oversee and govern their execution, and those persons whose proper office it is to execute them.

This observe against the usurpation of the Pope, and see the supremacy of King *Josiah*, that he is supreme over all, not only over temporal persons, but over Evangelical persons; for there was an *High Priest* at that time, and the Levites, but none were above King *Josiah*.

Quest.
Sol.

I, but this was under the Law, say the Papists.

I answer, that this is a rule in Divinity; that *The Gospel doth not take away, or dissolve the Law of Nature and Reason*: therefore if the Supremacy belonged to the Prince then, surely now much more. Therefore saith one, *We give respect to the Emperour, as next to God*: to God in the first place, and then to the Emperour. The Ministers have power over the Prince, for to direct him, and give him counsel, but yet they are not above him. A Physitian doth give directions for his Patient, is he therefore above him? so a builder giveth direction for the building of the Kings House: is this any supremacy? so the Ministers may give direction and counsel to the Prince: but hath he therefore any superiority above the Prince? surely no.

2.

In the second place, here we see, who it is, that called this Parliament. It was King *Josiah*, he was the first mover in calling of this Council, for he was the head: and had it not been a strange thing, to have seen the foot move before the head? The head must first give direction, before any of the members can move. Therefore it is onely in the Authority of the King, to gather a Council; and none must gather a publick Assembly without Authority from the King.

The calling of Assemblies belongs to the Prince. If it be a general Council, then it must be by the Emperour: if it be a National Council, then by the King or Prince of that Nation: if Provincial, then first from the King or Princes, as first movers of it, and so to others. As the Heavens and these celestial bodies over the Earth first move, and then all other afterward: so Kings ought first to move, and then all to follow.

Vs. 1.

If this be so, we see how the Pope wrongfully takes this right of calling Councils to himself, which properly belongs to the Emperour: for we know, that for a thousand years after Christ, the Emperour called Councils, if any were: but of late yeares, the Pope incroaching upon the Emperour, hath usurped this right of calling them: when as you see no Assemblies ought to be gathered without the Authority of the Prince.

Though Fasting be an excellent thing, yet publick Fasting must not be without the consent of the King. Let Christians have as much privat Fasting as they will, thereby to humble themselves, but publique Fasts must not be without the consent of the King: for *Great matters are to be done by great motions*. Here is a great matter of gathering a Council, therefore the head & body, & all joyn together. As it is when the body

is to do some great thing, all the members of the body stir together to do it: so it is with the Common-wealth; when great matters are in hand, all must be joyned together, as here *King, Priest, Levites, and all the People*, both great and small, joyned together, for to prevent the judgement threatned.

But what must we do if things be amisse? I answer. Take the right course, that is, go to *God* by prayer, and intreat him who hath the hearts of Kings in his hands, to incline and stir up the hearts of Princes, for to reform abuses. Well, but what did the King do, when he had gathered all the Elders and Inhabitants of *Judah* and *Jerusalem* into the house of the Lord? They went up thither to fast, and pray, and read the Book of the Law.

Reformation makes all outward things fall into a good rule, but they are to be called only by the Authority of the Prince, and when a fit time and occasion requires.

The Papists bragg much of the *Council of Trent*: but if ever there was a Conspiracy against Christ, it was in that Council: for the parties that had most offended, and were most accused, and should have been judged, were the Judges: and the holy Ghost, which should have been in the Council, and should have been their Judge, him they excluded, and received a foul Spirit of Antichrist sent unto them, in a Cap-case from *Rome*, whence they they had all their Counsel. Was not this a goodly Council?

Again, in that *Josiah* gathered a Council in a time of publique disorder and publique danger, here we learn, that, *It is not only lawfull, but many times necessary to gather Assemblies and Councils*, for Reformation of abuses both in Church and Common-wealth, which otherwise cannot be abolished. So Councils are good to make Canons, Rules, and to prevent Heresie; yea, much good may be done by gathering of them, if they meet to a good end, for the good of the Church, and the glory of God, for God who is willing and able to perform the good, will be strongly amongst them. For if Christ by his Spirit hath promised to be in that Assembly, where two or three are gathered together upon good grounds, and to good ends; how much more will he be, when two or three hundreds are so gathered together? But this must be done by the consent of Authority, otherwise it would be an impeachment to government. So much briefly for this Text, and for this time.

The first of these is the fact that the United States is a young nation, and that its history is a history of growth and expansion. The second is the fact that the United States is a nation of immigrants, and that its history is a history of the struggle for assimilation and the creation of a new American identity. The third is the fact that the United States is a nation of diverse peoples, and that its history is a history of the struggle for equality and the recognition of the rights of all citizens. The fourth is the fact that the United States is a nation of free people, and that its history is a history of the struggle for liberty and the protection of the rights of the individual. The fifth is the fact that the United States is a nation of peace-loving people, and that its history is a history of the struggle for peace and the avoidance of war. The sixth is the fact that the United States is a nation of progress-loving people, and that its history is a history of the struggle for progress and the improvement of the human condition. The seventh is the fact that the United States is a nation of idealistic people, and that its history is a history of the struggle for the realization of the American dream. The eighth is the fact that the United States is a nation of brave people, and that its history is a history of the struggle for courage and the defense of the principles of freedom and justice. The ninth is the fact that the United States is a nation of hardworking people, and that its history is a history of the struggle for industry and the creation of a better life for all. The tenth is the fact that the United States is a nation of hopeful people, and that its history is a history of the struggle for optimism and the belief in a bright future for the nation and the world.

THE ART OF SELFE-JUDGING.

DELIVERED IN A
Preparatory Sermon
TO THE
SACRAMENT,

At Colemanstreete-Church in LONDON.

By R. SIBBS D.D. Master of Katherine-Hall in Cambridge,
and Preacher of Grays-Inne LONDON.

The Third Edition.



Esay 57. 15. *For thus saith the high and lofty One, that inhabiteth Eternity, whose Name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy Place: with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.*

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THE ART OF SELF-JUDGING.

SERM. V.

I COR. II. 30, 31.

For this cause, many are weake, and sicke among you, and many sleepe: For if we would judge our selves, wee should not be judged.



Intend at this time, especially to stand upon the duty of Judging, as being fittest for the Occasion: But yet I will take the Text in order, and speak somewhat of the other words.

For this cause many are sick.] After the holy Apostle, the Seeds-man of God, had sowne the seed of heavenly Doctrine; Sathan also, by his Instruments, had sowne his Cockle of Abuses among the *Corinthians*: of which (amongst many) this was one, To come irreverently to the holy Communion; whereupon God was forced to take them into his own hands: and lest they should be ignorant of the cause, the blessed Apostle points them here (as it were with the finger) to the cause of the visitation among them, their unprepared comming to the Lords Table. In the words, we will speak of,

1. *The Cause of the Correction among them.*
2. *And then of the kindes of it: Many are sicke, and weake, and sleepe.*
3. *And then of the care (if it had been used) that might have prevented those contagious sicknesses among them: If we would judge our selves, we should not be judged.*

But

But lest Gods Children should despair, when they are judged, and sharply corrected of him, he addes in the next place, the comfort; howsoever things fall out, our Salvation is promoted, *When we are judged, and chastened of the Lord, It is, that we should not be condemned with the world.* First of the cause; Observe here,

Dott. 2. First, *When there is a cause, God will correct; and where there is this cause, he will correct:* that is, irreverent coming to the Communion.

Dott. 1. Secondly, *As there is a cause when God doth correct, so usually there is this, or that particular Cause,*

For the first, where there is cause, he will correct, and where there is this cause; where there is no cause he will not correct. (*For this Cause.*) There is always a cause, and a particular cause of Gods judgement is,

Quest. Why must there be alwayes a cause?

Sol. Because, *God is the Judge of the World, and the Judge of the World must needs do that which is right:* we have ill in us, before we suffer

Gen. 18. 25. ill. *God is forced to mortifie sins by afflictions, because we mortifie them not by the Spirit, and in the use of holy meanes:* God doth favour us from his own bowels, and from his own nature: but he never correcteth without a cause from us: corrections, and judgements are alwayes forced; it is a strange work to him, than favours, that come from his own nature, as a gracious God: and therefore the cause of his judgement is alwayes in us; But when he is beneficial to us, it comes from himself, as water comes from a Fountain.

Instruction. This should teach us, in all visitations, to justifie God, and to take heed of that, which our nature is prone to; of swelling and murmuring, and rising up against God. Just thou art, and righteous are thy judgements; I will bear the wrath of the Lord, because I have sinned, as it is said; *Micah 7. 9.* Let us lay our hand upon our mouth, and justifie God in all his visitations: There is a cause.

And not onely a cause at random: But if we search our selves, there is this, or that particular cause: So *2 Thes. 2. 10.* it is said; For this cause God gave them up to strong delusions, because they entertained not the truth in the love of it. There is a [*This:*] For God shootes not his judgements, as Children shoot their Arrowes at random, light where they will, but he hath his aime.

How shall we finde out that [*This?*]

Quest.
Ans.

1. *Our Consciences will upbraid us.* If we be well acquainted with our Consciences, we shall know it by them, as *Josephs Brethren* did; it was because they used their Brother hardly many yeares before.

2. Again, *What the word meets most with, when we hear it.*

3. And, *What our friends tell us most of.*

4. And, *What our enemies upbraid us most with.*

5. *That we may know the Cause, we may know the sin by the Contrary: God cures contraries with contraries.* We may read, oft-times, the Cause in the Judgement. Is the Judgement *Shame?* Then the cause was *Pride.* Is the Judgement *Wart?* Then our sinne was in *Abundance:* We did not learn to abound as we should, when we had it. It is an ordinary rule:

rule: Contraries are cured with Contraries. Usually God meets with men, he payes them home in their own coyn, and kind: Those that have been unmerciful, they shall meete with those that shall shew them no mercy. By searching into our own hearts, by considering these things, we may know, what is the [*This*] the particular cause.

And, *If we fail in the search, then go to God, that he would teach us; as well as he corrects us*; as usually he doth his Children, *Psal. 94. 12. Blessed is the man that thou correctest and teachest*. Desire God, that unto correction, he would adde teaching, that we may know, what the meaning of the rod, and of the crosse is. Whatsoever it is, if we joyne prayer with the other meanes, we may know the [*This*] the particular Sin, that God aims at. So you see it cleare, that there is a Cause, and usually some particular cause.

The next point is, that *Where there is a Cause, God will correct, first or last*; and where there is this Cause mentioned, (*irreverent comming to the Communion*) he will do it, because he is just: if we prevent it not by repentance, and so afflict our souls, surely we must fall into Gods hands: he will lose the glory of none of his Attributes; where there is a cause he will correct. Sin is against his Nature, against his Truth, against his manner of dealing with us by favours and benefits; and therefore he will correct us. For, even as smoak goes before fire, and as conception goes before birth, and as Seed-time goes before Harveſt; So some sin or other goes before correction, universally: unless it be those daily infirmities that Gods Children fall into, those sins of daily incurſion (as we call them.) When we labour to knit our hearts fast and close to God, some infirmities slip from us that God over-looks; he takes not notice of every slip from us that God over-looks; he takes not notice of every slippe: he beares with our infirmities, *As a Father beares with a Sonne, that serves him*. And yet if we allow our selves in any infirmity, we shall not go unpunished: For infirmities are one thing, and allowance and defence of them is another. Ded 3.

Take heed of sinning upon this false conceit; We shall escape, we shall never hear of it again. No, it will be owing first or last: As we say of those, that make bold with their bodies, to use them hardly, to rush upon this thing, and that thing; in their youth they may bear it out, but it will be owing them after, they shall finde it in their bones when they are old: So a man may say of those that are venturous persons, that make no conscience of running into sin; These things will be owing to them another day; they shall hear of these in the time of sickness, or in the houre of death. And therefore never sin upon vain hope of concealing: for as there is a Cause alwayes, and [*this Cause*]: So where there is a Cause, God will correct his own Children. Viz.

Again, *Where there is this Cause God will visit, what was this cause? This cause was [irreverent, unprofitable comming to the holy Table of the Lord.] Why, is this so great a matter to provoke Gods judgement?* Oh yes: Favours neglected, provoke anger most of all.

Is it not a great favour for the great God to descend to help our weakness in the Sacrament? Is it not a special favour, that he will

The greatness
of the sinne
of irreverent
receiving.

— floope

stoop to strengthen our weak faith this way? And shall we when he condescends to us, rise up in pride against him, and forget our distance, forget with whom we have to deal? No, God will be honoured of all that come neere him; if not by them, yet in them. *Those that come not to God now, in Christ, a father, they know not his goodness; and those that come irreverently, know not his greatness and Majesty.* Take heed therefore, when we come before God, that we come not with strange fire, as *Nadab* and *Abihu*; that we come not irreverently, and unpreparedly with carnal affections; but that we converse in holy business, with holy affections. Is it not great pity, that those things, which God hath ordained for the comfort of our souls, and the help of our faith, that we by our carelesness should turn them to our hurt? as we do by an irreverent comming to the holy things of God: we procure our own judgement: and therefore we ought to help this irreverent demeanour, and carriage of our selves, in the holy things of God by all meanes, with the consideration of his Majesty, and our dependance upon him, and the like.

To go on to the kindes of judgement, which are set down in three degrees.

- 1. *Some are weake.*
- 2. *And, some sicke.*
- 3. *And some sleepe.*

Nay, many are sicke and weake, and many sleepe. Here are three degrees, like the three degrees of sin among them; some were more presumptuous than other, and *God who made all in number, weight and measure, dispenseth all in number, weight and measure.* Some are weak, and some are sick, which is greater; and some sleepe, that is, dye, which is greatest of all. Even as in the Common-wealth, those that are discreet Governours, have degrees of punishment, as the Stocks, the Prison, and the Gibbet, violent death, and the like: So God the great Governour of heaven and earth, according to the different degrees of sin, hath different degrees of correction.

A *Physitian* loves all his *Patients* alike, but he doth not minister sharp potions alike to all; but out of the same love, there is a different carriage of the same, according to the exigent of the party: So doth the wise God: Some are weake, and some sicke, and some sleepe.

Again, we may observe here, that *Sickness and weakness of the body, comes from sin, and is a fruit of sin*: Some are weak, and some are sick for this cause. I shall not need to be long in the proof of that, which you have whole Chapters for, as *Dent. 28.* and many *Psalms, 107.* and others: it is for sickness of the Soul, that God visits with the sickness of the Body: He aims at the Cure of the soul in the Touch of the body. And therefore in this case, *when God visits with sickness, we should think our worke is more in heaven with God, than with men, or Physick.* Begin first with the soul: So *David, Psal. 32.* till he dealt roundly

ly with God, without all kinde of guile, and confessed his sins, he roared, and his moisture was turned into the drought of Summer: But when he dealt directly and plainly with God, and confessed his sins, then God forgave him them, and healed his body too. And therefore the best Method, when God visits us in this kinde, is to think that we are to deal with God; begin the Cure there with the soul: when he visits the body, it is for the souls sake, *Many are weak and sick among you.* We see what Tabernacles of dust we carry about us, that if we had no outward enemy, yet God can raise that in our own bodies, that shall cast out the greatest gyant (weakness and sickness) that we may learn to fear God, in whose hands is both health and sickness: And it should teach us to make precious use of our health, while we have it: It were a thousand times better for many persons, to be cast on the bed of sickness, and to be Gods prisoners, than so scandalously, and unfruitfully to use the health that they have.

The sin was general, and Gods visitation was as general: *When sins grow generall, corrections grow generall;* it is an idle, and vain excuse, that many think to make to themselves: The world doth thus; others do thus. Oh there is the more danger of a spreading visitation. Do others so? is it a spreading sin? take heed of a spreading, and contagious punishment. We must not follow a multitude to do evil: *He is not a whit tormented, that is tormented with Company.* The plea therefore that they may make from many, that the world doth thus; it should rather, (if they did wisely reason) move them to take heed: *Many are sick and weak, and many sleep,* that is, many even dye: God takes away the life of many, for the irreverent comming of the holy things of God: So that sin brings with it death it self; not only at the last, but sin it shortens a mans dayes: and this kinde of sin, (irreverent comming to the holy things of God) shortens our dayes, puts out our own Candle, and pulls our own houses about our eares, they are *scandals* upon themselves, soul-murderers, and body-murderers, that wilfully commit sin, yea, if it be this sin in the holy things of God: not only if they commit grosse sins, but if they commit this sin; if they be careless, and unconscionable in the performance of this holy duty: if any other did us the thousand part of that harm we do our selves, by a careless life, a loose and lawless kinde of course, we would not bea them: We see here, what hurt we do our selves, what injury, what wrong we do to our own souls, and bodies also: For, *For this cause, many are weak, and sick, and many sleep.*

Dall 6.

Exod. 23. 2.

We are the greatest enemies to our selves: we cry out of *Judas* and *Achitophel*, that made away themselves, (and we may well,) every stubborn man, that goes on in a course of sin, and forgets with whom he hath to deal, he is like *Judas* and *Achitophel*: he is an enemy to himself, and a murderer of himself. Oh take heed therefore of the Devils baits, meddle not with this pitch, touch it not, hate all shewes, and appearances of evil.

Again, it is not to be forgotten (here) that he saith, *many of you;* that

Dall. 7.

is,

Dist. 7. is, you beleeving *Corinthians*, whence learn that *God will correct sinne, wheresoever he findes it, even in his dearest Children*: nay he will correct them more sharply in this world, (because he will save their souls in another world) than he will others. The careless world, that are not worthy of correction, God lets them go on in smooth wayes to hell; but *many of you shall be sick and weak*. Let none think to be exempt, and venture themselves from grace they have; no, God will look to those of his family, he will have a special eye to them, he will have them well ordered. *You have I known of all the Nations of the world,* (saith he) *and therefore I will be sure to punish and correct you.* Let none therefore bear themselves upon their profession, I do thus and thus, so many good things, therefore I may be bold; nay therefore you may be the lesse bold; *Moses* cannot so much as murmure, at the waters of strife, but he must not come into *Canaan*: *David* cannot have a proud thought of numbring the people, but he must smart for it; the *Corinthians* cannot come irreverently to the Communion, but for this cause many are weak and sick.

Numb. 20. 2.
1 Chron. 21. 2.

I beseech you, let us take it to heart; and let no prophane person take encouragement, because God so deales with his own: if God deal thus with the green Tree, what will he do with the dry? If Judgement begin at the House of God, where shall the sinner and ungodly appear? If the godly taste of the cup of Gods anger, the wicked must drink off the dregs of his wrath. And therefore, let no man take offence, that God followes the Church with crosses, that the crosse followes the poor Church in the world; alas, they carry corruptions about them continually, as we see here. Let us therefore labour to make an end of our Salvation with fear and trembling, the best of us all.

Dist. 8.

One thing more, before I leave this: that is, *how God in Justice, remembreth mercy*. [*Many*:] he saith not [*All*:] and [*many of you are weak*] he takes not all away with death; it is a mercy then, that the correction is outward in the body; weak in body, and sick, there was not a spiritual giving up to hardness of heart. Beloved, if we consider, what kinde of judgements, spiritual judgements are; to have a seared Conscience, and a hard and desperate heart, which are fore-runners of hell, and of eternal judgement and damnation; we would much prize mercy in judgement. Oh it is not so with Gods Church, their visitations are in the outward man, they are *weak*, and *sick*, and *dye*, but God is merciful to their souls, as we shall see hereafter: And it should be an Art, we should learn; and labour to be expert in, to consider Gods gracious dealing in the midst of his corrections, that in them we might have thankful, and fruitful hearts: which we shall not have, except we have some matter of thankfulness: consider, doth God make me weak? he might have strooke me with death, or if not, taken away my mortal life, he might have given me up to a spiritual death, to an hard heart, to desperation, so let us search out in the visitations that we are in, alwayes some matter of mitigation: and we shall alwayes finde, that it might have been worse with us, than it is. This shall serve for the cause. Now I come to *The Cure*.

If we would judge our selves, we should not be judged.

This

This course, if it had been used by the *Corinthians*, they might have prevented their weakness, sickness, and over-timely death: and so we, (if we take the course prescribed by the Apostle here) may prevent the like: and perhaps God will now in this dispensation that he useth in the latter end of the world, outwardly visit us; for now usually, his dispensation and government is more inward: and therefore we should take the more heed to what followeth; he may give us up, I say, to blindness, to deadness, to security; he doth not usually give men up to sickness, and to death now for such breaches, but his government is more spiritual. Indeed then (for the terrour of all) his government was more outward in the primitive times of the Church. To come therefore to that I mean to speak of: *The cure of all is judging*; there is a Judge set up in our own hearts; *If we would judge our selves, we should not be judged of the Lord.*

That which is translated here, *judging*, is by the best Expositors, one, and another, (according to the nature of the word) *If we would discern of our selves, if we would try our selves*; and have our senses exercised to distinguish what is good, and what is ill in us, and then to fall upon judging, triall, and discussing: the word signifieth primarily *to discusse*, and *to sift*, and then *to censure* upon that, and then after, *To sever our selves from the ill we censure*; the word implies all these duties. To judge our selves, what is meant by it

God hath so framed man, that he alone of all other creatures, can work upon himself: he hath this reflexed act, (as we call it): he can examine, judge, try, and humble himself; other creatures look straight forwards: Man, I say, can discern and put a difference: he can discern of relations: this, and that hath relation to such and such a thing. The beast cannot discern of relation: the beast goes to the water, and to the fodder, but knowes not what relation that hath to spirituall things; but, man when he sees the *Sacrament*, he can think of Christ; when he seeth one thing, he can think of this relation to more spiritual things: So he can discern of himself, and of the things he takes in hand, by a principle that God hath put into him, peculiar to himself. Now God hath set up in a man a judgement seat; wherein things should be judged, before they come to this scanning and judgement, we our selves are the parties judged, and we should be the Judges; we are the parties that examine, and the parties examined: we are the parties that condemn, and the parties condemned. This is the power of conscience, that God hath made his Vicegerent, and Deputy in us: But to acquaint you with what things I meane to speak of, as the time will give leave.

1. *First of all, out of these words, I will shew; that naturally we are very backward to this duty.* Do. 9.

2. *Secondly, I will shew you the Necessity, Profit, and Use of this self-judging.*

3. *Then of the time, when we should judge especially, when we are to deale with God in holy things.*

4. *And what to do after all, when we have judged our selves; what course to take then.* The unfolding of these things, will help us to understand

this great point, that is so necessary.

First of all, *Naturally we are wondrous backward to this duty*, as we see here in the *Corinthians*; they slubbered over this duty of Examination, and self-judging. What is the reason? The reason is, *it is an inward Act*: and naturally, we look to outward glorious things, there is no glory in it before the world, it is in God, and his own soul, and usually the life of careless persons, even of Christians sometimes, it is spent outwardly, they never enter into their own souls, to see what is there.

Quæst.
Sol.

1.
Why we de-
lay self ex-
amination.

3.

Again, *Naturally we rest in the judgement of others*. Others conceive well of us, and therefore we conceive well of our selves. Remember they are but our fellow Prisoners, what, can they excuse, if God accuse and condemn us? Those things that make us most odious to God, are undiscernable of the eye of man, as a proud heart, a revengeful spirit, and earthly disposition, and the like: no man can see these things.

3.

Again, usually we rest in this, *That we have wit enough to judge others*. The proud nature of man thinks it selfe some body, when it can get up, and judge others, perhaps better than it selfe: this is a poore contentment, and an easie thing for a man, to spend his censures upon others, and is done usually with some glory, it is necessary sometimes, to those that are under us, to discover to them, what we judge of their wayes, but oft-times (I say) it is done only of self-love and pride.

4.

Again, *We are backward to this duty*: Hence that the heart of man is a proud peece of flesh, and therefore he is loath to be conceited of himself, as there is cause. *Man naturally would be in a fooles Paradise*, he knowes if he enters deeply into himself, somewhat will be presented to the eye of his soul, that will be an ungrateful object to him; and therefore, because he will not force upon himself other conceits of himself, than he hath for the present; he is content never to examine his courses, but to go on still: as there are some creatures in the world deformed, that are loath to come to the water, because they will not see their deformity in it: So it is with the nature of man, he is loath to see his deformity, he is willing to be deceived. In other things, we are loath to be mistaken, but in our state between God and us, we are willing to be deceived, we deceive our selves, we are Sophisters unto our selves, in this great point. Thus we see, that it is a duty to which we are very backward, and that it is something hard, because it reflects upon our selves, and requires retyring: for naturally we are sloathful, and idle, & then sin it loves corners, which makes it harder.

Selfe exami-
nation what?

Now, *what is this sifting and searching of the heart, but a searching of all the Corners of the soul, by the light of Gods word, & Spirit? a searching of all the corners of the heart? this requires much pains*. Naturally we are loath to take pains with our own souls, though indeed this be a preventing pains, to shun a worse misery hereafter: there is nothing gotten by favouring our selves. What need I be large in this point? Oh if the worst man had that judgement of himself, as he shall have ere long, when he shall not be befotted, but be free from his spiritual drunkenness and madness that he is in, carried with the course of the world then,

then he shall judge truly of himself: Oh, that he could do it in time: but naturally (I say) what for negligence, and what for pride, and resting in the conceits, that others have of us, we neglect so necessary a duty.

Well then, to go to the second point: as we are prone to neglect it, so we must know, *that it is a necessary, and useful duty to judge our selves*; for it is the ground of all repentance: Jer. 3.6. He complains that they rushed a Horse into the battel, and no man said, what have I done? *What was the reason they rushed, as a Horse into the battel?* No man entred into himself, and said, what have I done? I considered my wayes, and turned my feet to thy Testimonies, saith David, Psal. 119. 59. *Consideration is the ground therefore of repentance, and conversion.* Thus in discussing of our wayes, and tryall of them, and of every good work, there must be this judging, this discerning, what is spirit, and what is flesh. A man cannot do a good work, without the use of this principle, that God hath put into him, of judging himself, and judging his wayes.

And then again, *It is a duty that makes a man good in himself*: for when we do outward good duties, they are good for others: If a man be bountiful, another hath the benefit: if he be merciful, another hath the profit: but when a man judgeth himself, and sets up a Court in himself, his own soul is the better for it, he is the more holy man, the more watchful man, the more cleere from his sins, he is the fitter framed for holy duties, it is the better for his own selfe; and therefore this duty it is the spring of all other good duties, and it is not beneficial to a mans own soul.

Again, *This is such a duty as doth settle the judgement, and make us impregnable in temptation.* When we have passed a judgement upon our selves, let this or that Judgement be, we care not; for we have judged our selves as we should by the rule: We know what we have done, we know what we have said, we are able to justify it: it makes us ready and able to give an account to God, and to the world for what we do. But what should I go further then the Text? here is a speciall good use it hath: *If we judge our selves, we shall not be judged of the Lord.* This judging of our selves, prevents a further judgement.

How is that?

First of all, *because we spare God a labour*, when we judge our selves, he need not take us in hand to judge us: His corrections and his Statutes are often called judgements, in the *Psalmes*; Now upon the neglect of his Statutes, we run into his judgements and corrections.

Then again, *Things judged in one Court, cannot be judged in another by equity.* The God of all justice and equity will surely strictly observe equity. When our sins are judged in an inferiour Court, when in the court of conscience, we have cited, indicted our selves before our selves, and given sentence upon our selves; then what was condemned in this lower Court of Conscience, it shall never be condemned for hereafter: and therefore the necessity of this duty issues hence: *if we judge our selves, we shall not be judged.*

2d Point.
D. R. 10.

Quest.
Solnt.

The excellent point of
self-judging.
1.

2.

3.

Quest.
Answ.
1.

2.

We may learn hence, that we may thank our selves for not returning into our souls: I was careless of setting up a Court in mine own heart: careless in using those abilities that God hath given me to discern, to understand mine own wayes: I have been careless there: and because I did not judge my selfe, it is just with God to judge me.

Quest.

Well, *If this be a duty, that we are backward to; and yet it is a holy, and useful duty: then we come in the next place to some directions how to carry our selves in it.*

Sol.
How to judge
our selves.
1.

First, in judging our selves, *let us call and cite our selves before our selves*, and fall to a reckoning both with our persons, and the state wherein we stand, and likewise the actions that come from us: what is good in us, and what is ill: what omitted, and what committed: what corruption is mingled with our best performances; and such like, as we shall see after. First, call our selves to a reckoning, and see whether we can give account to our selves or no: And if we cannot give account to our selves, much lesse can we to the All-seeing eye and Justice of God. I would fain have a worldling give account to himself, why the elder he growes, the more worldly he should be, he cannot give an account to himself for it. I would have a prophane swearer give account to himself, why he dallies with the great and terrible Majesty of God, as if he were greater than he, when he pronounceth that he will not hold him guiltless, that takes his name in vain. I would fain know of those that spend the prime of their time and yeares in the service of the Devil, and bring their rotten old age to God; what account they can give to their own hearts. I would have any sinner, that lives in a course of sin, give account to his own heart: thou wretched man, canst thou not give an account to thy selfe, God is greater than thy heart, how dost thou think to stand before the Judgement seat of God ere long? The first thing therefore, is to arraign our selves at our own barre, (I exclude not others, that have calling to examine others,) but especially present our selves.

2.

And when we finde any thing amisse, *then besides this arraignment of our selves, we must give sentence against our selves*: that is the second thing in discussing: as David, *Psal. 73. 22.* So foolish was I, and as a beast, when he had entertained a thought that God neglected his Church, and regarded it no more, he had a dishonourable thought of God raised in his heart, Oh saith he, I was ashamed, so foolish, and so like a beast was I: and so you have the Prodigal, and *Dan. 9. & Ezra 9.* for examples how to passe a Censure upon our selves, when we finde any thing amisse, and labour, that those affections that are in us towards ill, as grief and shame, and sorrow, may be stirred up in us, by setting our selves in grief and shame, and sorrow, as we should, to turn the stream of our affections the right way.

3.

Luk 19. 8.

Then proceed to *Execution*, let them go together, *Judgment & Execution*; this the Apostle calls an holy revenge; If we have been proud, let us abase our selves; If we have been base in the duties of Charity, & good works to others, let us now, as *Zachew*, labour for the contrary. If we have mispent our precious time, let us labour now to redeem the time, to do the contrary good: This course we ought to take.

And

And for the things that we ought to sift, and to try, and to judge, they are not only our persons, but whatsoever comes from us: we are to judge all our actions, not only for ill actions, but our good actions. There is much dross mingled with our gold, let us examine our best actions: Nay, and not only our outward, but go to the very root. When we finde a fault in any outward action, follow it to the very corrupt spring. Those that have a Plant that beares venomous fruit, they dig it at the root; so when any bad fruit comes from us, go to the root, strike there at it, follow sin to its burrow, its first hatching place, to the very heart. Thus *David* doth, *Psal.* 51. 5. he goes to his birth sin: What should I speak (saith he) of the sins that I have committed? In sin was I conceived. In all actual sins, look to the corrupt root and puddle whence they come; as, Oh what is this word that I have spoken? what is this action? I have a corrupt nature that is ready to yield to an hundred such upon the like occasion, and thereupon go to the heart, and the soul, and censure that; for that is worse than any particular act whatsoever.

Take heed of laying the fault upon this or that occasion, when we finde our selves faulty. No, say it was thou my proud heart, it was thou mine angry heart, my base worldly heart, the occasion did but help, the principall was mine own heart. Let us labour therefore to be acquainted thorowly with our heart, that is wondrous unfaithful, there is a mystery of deceit in it.

What is the reason that Gods Children sometimes fall into sins, that they never thought of, and that (naturally) they are not prone to?

Because there is no man that sufficiently knowes the depth of the falshood of his own heart. For *Moses* to become an angry man, that was the meekest man on earth, it was strange: yet at the waters of strife, he brake forth into passion. For *David*, that had his heart touched for cutting off the lap of *Sauls* Garment, it was strange to come to murder: Now who would have thought, that murder had lodged in *David's* heart? For *Peter* that loved Christ so much, to come to deny and to forswear his Master, who would have thought, that forswearing had lurked in the heart of *Peter*? Beloved, we know not what corruption lurks in our hearts: Nay sometimes we shall finde, if we search our hearts narrowly, those corruptions therein, that at other times we are not prone to, (so deceitful is our heart.) And therefore in all breaches outwardly in speech or carriage, be sure to run to the heart, to condemn sin, and to strike at it there.

Well, thus we see some directions how to carry our selves. It is not (Beloved) the having of corruption that damns men, but the affections we carry towards our corruptions. The best of us have corruptions, but mark how we do carry our selves towards them. A carnal man pleades for his corruptions, he strengthens them; and another man hath corruption, but it is hardly used. Corruption is differently used in the heart of a carnall, and of a gracious man; for in the one it is fostered, cherished, and pleaded for; in the other man it is indeed, but it is subdued, & mortified: it is judged & condemned: as we say of a man, when judgement is

2.

Quest.

Solut.

Numb. 20. 10.

1 Sam. 24. 5.

2 Sam. 11. 15.

Matth. 26. 72.

How corruptions hurteth us.

Note.

passed upon him, he is a dead man, though he be not dead, because the sentence of death is passed upon him; who when he comes to be executed, by little and little he dies, till he be perfectly dead: So it is, when corruption is judged by us, and condemned in our hearts, it is as it were dead, because we have passed the sentence on it, we have condemned it, therefore because we have begun the execution that shall end in death; and therefore as we would difference our selves from the world, let us labour more and more, that though we have corruption, yet to carry our selves thus towards it, to make it more hateful by all meanes; We cannot make it too hateful to us, it doth us all the mischief in the world, it is the ill of ills, all other ills are but the fruit of it; it puts a fiery venomd sting unto all things; it makes things comfortable uncomfortable, as the houre of death that should be thought on, as our entrance into Heaven; and the day of judgement, the consideration whereof should be our joy. What makes these things terrible? Oh, it is sin, the sin that we cherish and love better then our souls; it is that that makes things that are most comfortable, uncomfortable. What a thing is that, that makes us afraid to go to God? to think of a gracious God? that hinders us in our best performances? that makes us backward and dull? Labour by all meanes to make sin odious, I say. In the best Common-wealth in the world, there will be lurking rebels, base people: What, doth the Common-wealth bear the blame? No, the lawes are against them, and they are executed when they are found out. So in the best heart, there will be rebellious thoughts, evil thoughts, but let it not be laid to the charge of Gods people; there are lawes against them, they labour to finde them out, and to execute them; here is the comfort of Gods children, that though they groan under many Infirmities, yet they look upon them as enemies, and as objects of their mortification.

[Note.

3

Well, (to hasten.) Again, in judging our selves, *Let us labour to judge our selves for those things that the world takes no notice of*; for spirituall, for inward things: as for stirring of *Pride*, of *Worldliness*, of *Revenge*, of *Security*, of *Unthankfulness*, and such like, *unkindness towards God*, *barrenness in good duties*, that the world cannot see: Oh let these humble our hearts. For want of judging our selves for these, God gives us up to outward breaches, and justly too: When we make not conscience of spiritual sins, God gives us up to open sins, that stain and blemish our profession.

4

Again, *for the sins in good duties*; Take heed in our best performances, that we be not deceived in them. Poyson is dangerously taken in sweet Gloves, and in sweet things, because it is conveyed in sweetness: and so in holy duties, there is conveyed pride, and resting in them. Take heed lest corruption mingle some deadly thing with our best performances.

The *Corinthians* came to the Table of the Lord, but because they thought the duty good, and that they might not sin in a good duty, they came hand over head, carelessly unto it; oh, but we see how God deales with them; And therefore let us examine in good duties and performances,

formances, with what mindes we come, with what preparation, with what aimes and ends we perform them: Many thousands we may fear are damned, even for good duties: for because they are not ill in themselves, they think they may be bold there, and put off the power of grace, and rest in common civil things, even in outward performances: *When we regard not the manner, God regards not the matter of the things we do*, but oftentimes he punisheth for the performance of good duties, as we see here in the *Corinthians*. But to proceed.

Let us observe some helps to all this that we have spoken: Let the rule of our judging and discerning, be digested into our hearts: let the Word of God be ingrafted into us: that is the word that we must judge by: that we must be saved or damned by ere long: as for false rules, the practice of the world, and our own imaginations, away with them; we must not judge by those, but by the truth of God: therefore be sure of this, that so the rule and our souls may be one, that we may have the rule as ready as any corruption, and as any sin is, when any thing arises in our hearts, that the Word ingrafted in our hearts, may be ready to check it presently. An unlearned Judge oftentimes may marre all, (whatsoever the cause be, though never so good.) So when the judgement is not instructed, an ignorant person can never manage his own soul: Let us labour for knowledge, that we may be learned in this judicature of our selves.

Directions
how to judge
our selves.

I

What is the reason that many good souls are ready to bear false witness against, and to condemn themselves for what they should not?

Quest.

Sometimes they condemn their estate, and think that they are not the Children of God when they are: they want judgement out of Gods book; because they have corruption in them, they conclude that they have no grace, because they have but little grace, therefore they have none at all; *as if Gods glory were not to shew his strength in the midst of their weakness; and so for want of judgement out of the Scriptures, they lay a plaister upon a sound place, & a true man is condemned for a Traitor.* Just persons condemn themselves in their courses that are gracious; for want of a sanctified and good judgement: Let us labour to have our judgement rightly instructed out of Gods Word, and in the use of all good meanes, grow in knowledge, that we may be discerning Christians, to judge between good and bad, to have our senses exercised in this kinde.

Sol.

I

Why Gods
Children
come to be-
lieve & wrong
themselves.

Note.

And not only to have the Law, but to know the Gospel too: To know in what estate Christians should be under the Gospel, not to look to legal breaches altogether, but what the Gospel requires: not only how short we are of the Law, (which we can never attain unto) but of that, which we might attain to in the Gospel: *Let us bring our selves to that which we might be, and which others have attained to*, to the view of others better than our selves, and this will make us to judge our selves. But (as I said before) let us labour to know the sins against the Gospel; let us know what condition of life is required under the Gospel: a *fruitful* life, and a *thankful*; our whole life should be nothing but thankfulness under

2

What kind of
life the Gospel
requires.

under the Gospel, and fruitfulness; we should be inflamed with the love of Christ: Oh take heed of turning that Grace of God into wantonness: Oh, would we have fresh evidence of the love of God in Christ? would we not doubt of the love of his favour? take heed of sins against the Gospel: know what the conversation of a Christian should be, to walk worthy of the Gospel, worthy of the high calling of a Christian. The state of the Gospel requires, that we should deny all ungodliness, and worldly lust, and live righteously, and soberly, and godly; that we should be earnest, and zealous of good works. When we finde our selves otherwise, think, Oh this is not the life of a Christian under the Gospel; the Gospel requires a more fruitful, more zealous carriage, more love to Christ: *Anathema Maranatha*, belongs to him that loves not the Lord Jesus; and therefore when we finde any coldness to so gracious a God, and so blessed a Saviour, let us condemn our selves.

1 Cor. 16. 22.

3. And take the benefit likewise of the judgement of others, if we would learn to judge our selves thoroughly, consider what others say: *It is one branch of the Communion of Saints, to regard the judgement of others.* Oh it is a blessed thing to have others tell us of our faults, and as it were to pull us out of the fire with violence (as *Jude* speaketh,) rather to pull us out with violence, with sharp rebukes, then we should perish and be damned in our sins. If a man be to weed his ground, he sees need of the benefit of others; if a man be to demolish his house, he will be thankful to others for their help: So he that is to pull down his corruption, that old house, he should be thankful to others, that will tell him, this is rotten, and this is to blame; who if he be not thankful for seasonable reproof, he knowes not what self-judging meanes. If any man be so uncivil, when a man shewes him to be an unreasonable man? And so when a man shall be told, This will hinder your comfort another day; if men were not spiritually besotted, would they swell and be angry against such a man? Therefore take the benefit of the judgement of others, among whom you live; This was *David's* disposition, when he was told of the danger in going to kill *Nabal* and his Household, when *Abigail*, a discreet woman, came and diverted him, Oh (saith he) *Blessed be God, and blessed be thou, and blessed be thy Counsel*, thou hast kept me from shedding of innocent blood this day. So we should blesse God, and blesse them that labour by their good counsel and advice to hinder us from any sinful course whatsoever.

1 Sam. 25. 32

4. And then again (as a help to awaken thy Conscience) go to the house of mourning; that will help us by awakening conscience: consider the judgements of God abroad in the Church, and consider our danger at home, and labour to have our hearts awakened, and then we will be ready to judge our selves, when we keep our souls in a waking temper: take heed of spiritual security above all things.

5. For our conversation, let it not be with the world, for then we will justify our selves; but converse with those that are better, & the light of their excellency will abase us, & make us to judge our selves. I have reason to be as good as they, to be as forward as they: what a shame is it for me

not

to do as they do? To bring our selves to the light of good examples, it doth much good to Christians, and makes them ashamed of their backwardness and dulness. Those that have false hearts, shun the company of those that are better than themselves; who because they would have all alike, they besmeare and sully others in their reputation, because they shall not be thought to be better than they. A base and devilish course: whereas a Christian labours to converse with those that are better, because he would grow better than himself: take heed of a false heart in this kinde.

Again, (because I cannot follow the argument so fully as I thought I should have done) when all these helps, and directions perhaps are not sufficient, *Joyn with these a desire, that God would help us by his own Spirit to search our hearts, and judge our selves*, and complain to him of our corruptions and weaknesses; as the *Virgin*, when she was forced, *Dent. 22. 26.* if she complained, she saved her reputation, and her life: So complain to God, Lord I would serve thee, but corruption beares too great a sway in me: and desire God to help us with heavenly light and strength, so shall we escape eternal death. Corruption is our enemy, it is Christs enemy as well as ours, and Christ (if we beg of him) will help us against his enemy and ours: this should be our daily course and practice.

Now some will object, *Here is a troublesome course, what a deal of do is here? What kinde of life would you have the life of a Christian to be, to be thus discussing, and censuring?*

I answer, *It is the trouble of Physick, that prevents the trouble of sickness.* Is it not better to be troubled with Physick, than to be troubled with a long and tedious sickness? Is it not better to be troubled with the pain of a tent, than with the pain of a wound? All this is but preventing: by this course, we prevent further trouble. For we must know, that God hath put conscience into us, and this conscience must, and it shall have its work, either in this world, or in the world to come: And therefore let us discharge it now by sitting, by examining, and condemning our selves, that it may not rise and stand against us, when we could have it our friend. Oh carry things so, that conscience may be a friend at the day of Judgement: put it out of office now, let it say what it can, stifle it not, stop it not, divert it not, let it have its full scope to say what it can. For I beseech you do but consider the fearful estate of a man, that hath neglected self-examination, when he comes to dye, and is in any trouble, when he sees death before him, live he cannot, and to dye he is unfit: for if he look back, he looks back to a world of sin not yet repented of; forwards, he sees eternal damnation before him: if he look to God, he is offended for his rebellious course of life: where is then the comfort of such a one, that in the glorious light of the Gospel, doth not practice this duty of judging himself?

Sin must be judged, either in a repentant heart, or else by God, it being against Gods prerogative, for he hath made a Law against it; judged it must be, we must give account of every idle word, either in a repentant

pentant heart by afflicting our own souls for it, or at the day of judgement. Now what a fearful thing will this be to have all to make account for then? Is it not a great mercy (Beloved) that God hath pointed out such a course to set up a Court of Conscience to prevent shame? Were it not a shame for us to have our faults written in our foreheads? and yet better so, than to have all to reckon for at the day of judgement. For if all our faults were laid open, our corrupt thoughts; and vile affections here, there were hope of repentance in this world; but to have them laid open to our shame and confusion in the world to come, it is a matter of eternal despair. Now God to prevent both these, hath set up a Court of Conscience, that we might judge our selves, and prevent shame here, and damnation hereafter.

And how shall this torment wretches in Hell, when they shall think, God put conscience in me; if I had not put it off, but suffered it to have done what it would, I might have been thus and thus, but now I have wilfully cast my selfe into this misery: it will be the Hell in Hell; that shall torment us more than the flames; when we shall think, I have brought my selfe carelessly and securely to this cursed estate; therefore I beseech you consider the misery of a man, that neglects the practice of this duty, and consider withall, how happy and how sweet the condition of that man is, that hath, and carefully doth daily perform this duty: he is afraid of no ill tidings: if any thing come, he hath made his reckoning and account with God; there is no sin upon the file unrepented of, and unjudged, and unconfessed to God. If he looks back, he considers his sins, but he hath repented of them: If he looks forward, he sees nothing but God reconciled; and he can think of death, and judgement with comfort. Oh the happiness, and the peace, and the inward Paradise of such a man, above another careless man, that puts off his estate; because he will not trouble and afflict his own soul, and torment himself before his time!

Difference of
Christians and
wicked men.

Here is the difference between a careless and a sound Christian: what the one thinks now, the other shall ere long; but only the one is mad now, and is not his own man, but besotted with ambition and covetousness, the other is sober, and in his right wits, able to judge, and to censure himself. And therefore let holy persons, that are careful, passe not a whit for the censures of vain persons; they speak against what they know not; against a strict course of life: those that trusse up the loyns of their souls, and are careful of their ways, they are the only sound Christians, they are the only comfortable Christians, that can think of all conditions, and of all estates comfortably. I beseech you take these things to heart, and let us be stirred up to perform this duty of daily trying and examining our ways, that daily we may relish Christ.

Quest. What is the reason there is no more rejoycing, and thankfulness for Christ?

Sol. We keep not the wound, I mean corruption, open; we see that which is unmortified, but we dry it up; and therefore we do not relish Christ:

Christ: sweet is Christ to the soul, that is exercised in a search of his own heart and ways.

But at what times especially are we to examine?

At all times, every day: because we must feed on Christ every day, therefore we ought to have these foure herbes, considering that we daily sin, that Christ may relish; Christ justifieth the ungodly every day: we have use of justification, and therefore we should daily see our corruptions, and judge our selves for them: then Christ is Christ indeed, and Jesus is Jesus indeed to us. Every day let us do this: we have short memories, and sin when it is green, it is easily rooted out: therefore every day before sin be rooted, let us judge our selves: the more we do it now every day, the lesse we shall have to do when we die, and when we are on our sick beds, and therefore do it still, that we may have the lesse to do, when we are weak. Is that a fit time to go over our life, and to censure our courses, when we are in such a case, as we cannot think of earthly things? Oh, *It is an ill time to get grace, when we should use grace.* And therefore that we may have the lesse to do, when we shall have enough to do to struggle with sickness, and have nothing to do when we dye, but to dye, and comfortably yield up our souls to God, let us be exact in our accounts every day.

Quest.
Sol.

Times of selfe
examination.
1.

But more especially we should do so, when we are to deal with God, as now we are to receive the Communion, wherein we draw near unto him. Those that go to great persons, they will not go in rags, but put on their best attire, and make all neat and handsome, that nothing may be offensive. Have we this wisdom, when we appear before any greater than our selves? When we are to appear before God and Christ, (specially to have so near communion as we have in the Sacrament) let us labour much more to come neat and prepared. When they were to come to the *Passover*, the Lamb was singled out before hand three dayes, that they might have time to prepare themselves in. And ought not we to examine and judge our selves, when we come near to God in holy Communion, to feast with him? They should have prepared, and have judged themselves; but because they neglected it, they were judged of God: and therefore know, you that mean to receive now, now is the time when we should judge our selves: though we should do it every day, yet this is the special time. Take heed of Superstition though, to thrust all Religion into one time, to the time of the Communion, as many do: they turn off all their examination to a little time before the Communion, and the taking of the Communion to one time of the year, to *Easter*: and thus they think God will bear with them. Oh take heed of such a superstitious course; keep a daily account; every week examine how we have kept our daily account; and every moneth examine how we have kept our weekly account; and when we come to the Communion, examine how we have kept our daily account, whether we have grown in grace, got ground of corruption, been exact in time, hung loose from God, or not.

2.

Excd. 12. 6.

But what shall we do when we have done all? when we have examined.

Quest.

ned.

ned, and judged, and passed a censure upon our selves in a strict manner.

Solut.
What do we
do when we have
judged our
selves.

When we are condemned in one Court, go to another: as a man that is condemned in the *Common-Law*, he appeals to the *Chancery*: When we are condemned in the Court of Justice, fly to Gods Chancery, fly to mercy. He that hath a sentence passed in one Court, he appeals to another: when we have judged our selves, then appeal to mercy; for this is to do it in faith: and when we judge our selves in faith, then (upon our judging) we know that God will pardon. You know, he hath promised, If we confess our sins, he is merciful to forgive them. Say, Lord, I confess them, cancel thou the Bond, cancel thou the debt: therefore a Christians plea is, when he hath judged himself, to flye to God for pardon. *saul*, we know, could judge himself; and *Judas* could passe a sentence upon his own act, that he had sinned: but they went no further, they did not flye to God for mercy in Christ. Therefore let us flye to the Throne of Grace, as we have an excellent pattern of this, *Psal. 130. 3.* saith the Psalmist there, *If thou be strict to mark what is done amisse, Lord, who shall abide it?* There he is condemned in one Court; If thou be strict to mark what is done amisse, who shall abide it? There being condemned in that court, he flies to the Throne of grace: *But there is mercy with thee, that thou mightest be feared*: Lord if thou be strict to mark what is done amisse by me in this action, and in that action, who shall abide it? But Lord, there is mercy with thee in Jesus Christ, in whom thou hast stablished a Throne of grace. Take this course, and undoubtedly God will shew mercy, because the Sonne directs us to the Father in the Lords Prayer, that we should aske forgiveness; and God the Father directs us to his Sonne, *1 Iohn 3. 23.* to believe in him for forgiveness. *This is his Commandement, that we believe in his Sonne Jesus Christ.* We cannot honour the Father more, we cannot honour the Sonne more, than to goe to God for mercy, because God in Christ now, will be glorified in mercy to penitent sinners.

Pardon of
Course.

Let us fetch out a Pardon of course for every sin; If we confess our sins, he is merciful to forgive our sins: And therefore it is our own fault, if we finde not the assurance of the forgiveness of them, because we deal not roundly (without a spirit of guile) with God. That is the next duty then: After we have judged our selves, to go to Mercy: And to shew you one example, how peace comes in after this judging of our selves, *Rom. 7. 24.* the blessed Apostle complains of his own corruptions: he had laid sore to his own charge, that the ill that he would not do that he did; and the good that he would do, that he did not: and he breaks out, *O wretched man that I am!* What did he finde presently upon this? *Thanks be to God presently upon it*, as if he had found peace presently, upon complaining of his corruptions. So when we honour God by confessing, & judging our selves, he will honor us with inward peace and joy: *Because Faith honours him, by trusting & relying upon his Mercy.* If therefore we would finde inward peace in the pardon of our finnes, let us deale faithfully with our souls, in spreading our finnes before God, and we shall finde peace presently upon it: If not, learn
to

to waite, for undoubtedly GOD will make good his promise.

But what shall we doe in the next place, after we have so opened the case to God, and gone to him for pardon, and forgiveness, and mercy in Christ? Quest.

Then renew our covenant with God for the time to come, of better service; and enter upon reformation of life. Sol.

How shall we know that we have humbled our selves, and judged our selves as we should doe? Quest.

When we relish the mercy of God in the pardon of our sins. Sol.

But how shall we know when God hath pardoned our sins? Quest.

When he gives us grace to renew our covenants for the time to come, not to offend him, and when he gives us strength to reform our wayes; for, with pardoning Mercy, there goeth healing Mercy. *Psalm. 103. 1.* Praise the Lord O my soule, that forgives all thy sins, and heales all thine infirmities. So these must go together, judging and censuring of our selves; then pleading for mercy, and renewing of our covenants, with reformation thereupon. A Christian looks as well to the time to come, as to the time past; for the time past, he repents; for the time to come he resolves against all sin. A wicked carnall man could be content to be freed from the guilt of sins past, that his conscience might not touch him, and torment him; But for the time to come, he makes no conscience to entertain any vows, and purposes, or desire that God would assist him against all sin. A Christian is as carefull of the sin that he is in danger to commit for the future, as a wicked man is to have the sin past of his conscience pardoned. Sol.

As therefore we would have an evidence of our certainty in blisse, let us look that we renew our covenants, and purposes for the time to come: an excellent patterne for this, you have *Psalm. 19. 12.* where *David* prays, Lord cleanse me from my secret sins, (the present sins that hung upon him, and his sins past:) and what for the time to come? Lord keep me, that presumptuous sins have not the dominion over me. So we should pray to God, Lord cleanse me from my former sins, and keep me by thy holy Spirit, that presumptuous sins for the time to come have no power over me: as it is in the Lords Prayer, *Forgive us our debts, and lead us not into temptation* for the time to come: Those that feel in their souls assurance of pardon, will entertaine purposes against all sin: they will as heartily say, Lord lead me not into temptation, as they will say, Lord forgive me my sins. Exhortation.

I beseech you, let us lay these things to heart, to practice them; our peace depends upon them. Oh how sweet is peace and rest, after we have made our peace with God; when we have dealt thoroughly and soundly with our own soules, and have not daubed with them! There may be dangerous times a coming, there is a cloud hangs over our heads, we know not how it may fall; we see all the world is in combustion. Who, when troubles come, will be the happy man? Even he that hath judged himselfe, accused himself, that hath mortified his corruptions, and according to the grace that God hath given him, renewed his covenant, and laboured to reform his life, and keeps it in his purpose of heart. Use.

heart so to do : he is fit for all difficulties; whatsoever times come, they shall find him in good purposes. What a fearfull thing were it, if death, if some terrible judgement should light on us in an evill course of life, what would become of us then ? Happy man is he, that is in the good way, in good purposes, in good resolutions, that the bent of his soul is to God, and to heaven-ward: and therefore, as we would evidence to our selves, that our state is good, that we are wise and not fools; I beseech you let us practice this duty, and make it more familiar to us than we have done ; and then undoubtedly we shall finde somewhat in us better than Nature. Nature cannot judge it selfe, Corruption cannot passe a censure upon it selfe ; it is Grace, a principle above Nature, that censures Corruption : and therefore when we judge our selves, it is an undoubted evidence, that we are in the state of Grace : who would want such an evidence ?

Use 2.

Againe, when we find want of Grace, goe out of our selves, goe on to God, and Christ : naturally we stick in our selves : *Judas* and *Saul*, they could not goe to God for mercy, when their conscience was awaked with the sense of their sin. To goe to God for pardon, it is an argument that there is somewhat wrought above Nature in the heart; and therefore, as we would have an evidence to our souls, that there is somewhat in us above common men, *Let us judge our selves, let us spare no sinne, that God may spare all* : be severe to our selves, that God may be mercifull to us : and when we have done this, look to the abundant mercy of God in Christ: Where sin hath abounded, grace hath more abounded. Oh, mercy is sweet, after we have searched into our corruptions ; there is a height, and bredth, and depth of mercy, when we have felt the height, and bredth, and depth of corruption first. The Lord give a blessing to that which hath been delivered.

Rom. 5. 15.

THE

THE ART OF SELFE-JUDGING

SERM. VI.

1 COR. II. 30, 31, 32.

For this cause many are weaks, and sicke among you, and many sleepe.

For if we would judge our selves, we should not be judged.

But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.



AFTER blessed S. Paul had sown the seed of heavenly doctrine; Satan had sown some tares: besides some corruption in doctrine, there was also corruption in life among the *Corinthians*; whereupon God was forced in mercy to visit them with some judgement: and lest they should be ignorant of the cause, the blessed Apostle here doth put his finger to it, (*For this cause.*) We have considered these four things in the words: *The cause* of the Judgement: and then *the Kinds*: and *the Remedy* for the prevention, if it had been used: *If we would judge our selves, we should not be judged.* And *the Comfort*: howsoever, *When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.* Of the Cause, the Kinds, and the Remedy, we have spoken; and now we proceed to the Comfort.

Mark here the Text that I have read unto you : though we doe all neglect this fore-named Remedy in part, yet God is wonderfull mercifull : *When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.* We will unfold the Comfort, as the Text leads us : In the words consider these things especially.

1. *That there is a world that must be condemned.*
2. *And then, Gods people shall not be condemned with the world.*
3. *The third conclusion that ariseth out of the Text, is this, That the way that God sanctifies to prevent his children from damnation, is fatherly correction and chastisement : and therefore we are judged, that we should not be condemned with the world : in the unfolding of which course that God takes, these three things are to be touched.*

1. *That Gods dealing with his children are but chastisements.*
2. *They are his Chastisements : we are chastened of the Lord.*
3. *And they are blessed for this end, to keep us from damnation : these things we will speak of in order. First, There is a world that is to be condemned :*

Doff. 1. Gods children shall not be condemned with the world.

What is meant by the world.

What is the world in this place ?

The world in this place, it is not the frame of Heaven and Earth ; but (to avoid multiplicity of acceptions, in which were idle to spend time) by World here is meant those that *Peter* speaks of, the ungodly world, as we see 2 *Pet.* 3. 7. they are called the world of ungodly : so there is a world took out of the world, the world of the Elect : for as in the great world there is the little world, (*Man*), so in the great World of Mankind, there is a little world, the world of Gods people ; but here it is the world of the ungodly.

Why are they called the world ?

Why the wicked are called the world.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

They are called the world, partly because they are great in the world they swagger in the world, as if they were upon their own dunghill there, and as if they were the only men in the world, as indeed for the most part they are : Gods people are a concealed, a hidden people here. And then again, they are the world, because they are the most of the world : but especially they are the world, because the best thing in them is the world ; they have their name from that they love ; love is an affection of union : What we love, that we are knit unto. Now because carnall men are in love with the things of the world, being united in their affections to it, they have their name from that they love. And indeed, anatomize a carnall man, that is not in the state of Grace, rip him up in his soule, what shall you find in him, but the world ? you shall find in his brain, worldly plots, worldly policy, and vanity ; you shall find little of the Word of God there, and scarce any thing that is good, because the best thing in him is the world. But to passe from the meaning of the word to the point, *This world must be condemned.* Why condemned ? Mark these four or five reasons.

First,

First of all, *Because the world doth set it selfe upon things that must be condemned*, upon present vanities: all things in this world must passe through the fire ere long; the frame of Heaven and Earth, and all in it. Now those that love the world especially, and have no better things in their soules, they must perish with the world; he that stands on ice, and on slippery things, he slips with the thing he stands on: So those that fasten their soules upon the world, upon slippery and vain things, they fall, and slip with the things themselves. Now, because the worldly men pitch their happinesse in the things of this life, they are vain, as the things themselves are. But to goe on.

why the
world must be
condemned.

I

A second reason why the world must be condemned, is this, *Because they serve a damned Prince*; and it is pittie that the state of the subject, and the state of the Prince should be severed. Satan they serve, Satan rules in them according to his own lust. Satan bathes himself in their humour, (as it were) in their anger, in their pride, in their covetousnesse, in their passion: as *Saul* when he was given up to an evill passion, the devill seized upon him: so the devill leads them according to the streame of their own humour, and of their own lusts. Now being led by the temptations of Satan, who knows where to have them upon any Temptation, and leads them as we lead sheep with a green bough, when he presents any thing to them, he knowes where to have them; he himselfe being a damned Prince, and Governour, all that are under him, are in the same condition.

2

The third reason why the world shall be damned is this, *Because the world condemns God*; it is but quittance: Carnall people in the world condemne Gods wayes, and Gods Children, and the ways of Religion to be nice and foolish. The world hath its conceits of it self, and scorns the sweetnesse of religion, and accounts the Word, and obedience to be a weak and poor spirit: Now considering that the world passeth such censures upon Gods wayes, and condemns the generation of the righteous; if God condemn the world, do you wonder, when the base and slavish world led by the devill, and by their own lusts will condemne God, and his wayes? And certainly, if you would see into the poysonfull disposition of persons among whom we live, that are yet in the world, how malicious they are to Gods Courtes; you will not wonder that God hath ordained such to be set on the left hand to passe the sentence of eternall condemnation upon them: Because though the light discover to them which way they should walk; yet they abhorre all Gods wayes, and take wayes of their own: as if they would teach God wisdom, and prescribe what he should doe: as if they were wiser than God. All your Politicians are such, they leade their lives, as if they would teach God wisdom, what he should prescribe; as if they were wiser than he a great deale; doe you wonder that he condemns them then?

3

But you will say, *What do you talk? We are baptized, we hear now and then a sermon: are we the world? The world are Pagans, and Turks, and Jews, and such, perhaps Papiests; such as they are the world.*

Object.
Of worldlings
that they are
not the world

Oh no (beloved,) *Babylon is in Jerusalem*, as the Father saith, *Aug. de Civitate*

Ans^r.

Civitate Dei; the world is in the City of God, the world is among you; Nay, and that part of the world that shall be deepest damned, is here amongst us; for our damnation shall be deeper than the Turks, or Jewes; You have I known of all the Nations of the world, (saith God) and therefore I will be sure to visit you. The three bad grounds were the world; howsoever all heard the word, yet there was but one good: you may be of the world, and yet live in the midst of the Church, as *Paul, Philip*. 3. complains of many, of whom (saith he) I have told you often, and now tell you weeping, they are enemies to the Crosse of Christ, (they were Teachers in the Church, they were so far from being Aliens) whose end is damnation, whose belly is their god, whose glory is their shame, who mind earthly things. When the Guides and Teachers of the Church, that should give ayme of salvation to other people, when they shall make their belly their god, and damnation their end; shall we secure our selves that we are in a good estate, because we are baptized, and because we hear the Word, when the three bad grounds did so? it is another manner of matter to be out of the world, and to be in Christ, than the world takes it for. Beloved, in holy duties there are two things, there is *the holy duty, the shell, and, the life and soul of the Duty*. A carnall worldly man may doe the outward thing, he may be baptized, and receive the Communion, he may come to hear the Word of God; but there is a life and soul in the duty; to hear as he should, to be moulded into the performance of it, to obey that we hear, and to come to receive the Sacrament with reverence and due preparation, and to encrease the assurance of salvation, and our comfort and joy; This is the hard part of the duty, this the world cannot do: let us value our selves by the practice of the inward part of the duty, the power of the duty, and not rest in the outward performance.

4

The next reason to shew that the world must needs be condemned, it is this, *Because even in the Church there are a company of men* (I beseech you let not your thoughts go out of our congregations & places we live in, when we speak of the world, *that wil be damned*; it is a strang thing, that will be damned? who will be damned? I say, there are a company among whom we live, that resolve to be damned: Why? there are evill courses, which whosoever will take, they will go to hell, they will end in death, as in the *Proverbs*, he that takes such a course, hates his own soul: God saith thus, who is wisdom himself, and therefore if you wilfully walk in those courses that lead to hell; it is much as if you resolved you would be damned. Indeed there is none but would be saved, if they could be saved in the paths of the broad way that lead to damnation; they could be content to go to heaven in a race of vanity: who would not be saved in that sense? but the world will be damned in this sense, if they resolve to take a course to flatter their own lusts, going their own ways in spight of God, in spight of his Truth, in spight of conscience, and to despight the Spirit that awakeneth them, & tels them that there is another way that they should walk in, & puts them in mind, this is the way, walk in it; and this is not the way, avoid it: and

and yet they will rush on in their courses, as the horse rusheth into the battel; say God what he will, the world will be damned. Are there not many that have been told of their pride, and hypocrisie, of their vanities, of their lusts, of their sins, that their conscience tells them; they pamper themselves in, and they will not amend for all this? This in Gods construction (and this conscience will tell them another day) is because they would go on rebelliously in courses tending to damnation. Nay which is worse, there is a generation of venomous persons, that hate the Ministers, hate good people, hath the Image of God, and hate any thing that may present to their hearts a dislike of the courses they are wedded to: Oh I would they would hate the devill so: and doe you wonder that these are damned, that hate the Image of God, the motions of the Spirit, and raise reproaches upon Religion, and make it odious as much as they can, that their vilenesse may the lesse appear, and be the lesse disgraced in their wicked wayes? and yet this is the course of many thousands in the bosome of the Church, and in the best places that are guilty of this; whom, if one tell, that this temper and frame of soul is contrary to God, and will yeeld nothing but desperation in the end, they will nothing regard what you say. Well, I must hasten; many other reasons there are to shew that the world must be damned: As, *The world, it is shut out of Christs prayer*; they have no part in the prayer of Christ, in him that dyed to redeem us: and the world will not receive the Spirit, because they maintain their own lusts many other reasons the Scripture heaps upon this, that there are a company of men that must, and will be damned. But what is the use of this?

5 Reason.

First, to pull our friends, our Children out of the world, To get our selves out of the world, as soon as we can; come out of *Sodom*, come out of *Babylon*, make all haste; for as the Angell tells *Lot*, I will destroy this place; the world is a place that God will destroy, it is *Sodom*, it is *Babylon*, get out of it, there is no being there, except you will reap eternall damnation with the world.

Uses.

1

First, in regard of our friends.

Again, passe not for the censures of worldly proud people that think that they are jolly Christians, when they are but in truth damned persons: God may recover them, but yet they are in damnable wayes; who cares for the sentence of a damned person, till he have gotten his pardon? such are all prophane persons, that have not the work of Grace wrought in their hearts in an effectual manner, they are yet in the state of damnation; why should we passe for their censures? There are a company of weak persons, who reason as weakly; If I doe this, the world will say thus, and thus; What is the world? the world is a generation of unregenerate wretched people, that must be damned: who would regard the censure of a damned person? and indeed, who would follow the guise of damned persons? And yet of late such is the madnesse of people, that they take up the fashions, though they be condemned fashions, and doe not consider the vanity of it. The world is a condemned generation, therefore take not up their guise. The worlds fashion is the worst fashion of all. I speak not of correspondency with the world

2

To neglect the censures of worldlings.

in

Note.

in civill Actions in the passages of our life : We must come out of the world. (as Christ saith) if we will not be correspondent in outward things : and here should be a redeeming of our peace with the world in yielding in lesser matters. But I speak of those things which concerne our inward comfort and peace, & that concern the practice of holy duties; let us not stand in it, what the world judgeth, or allowes, but practice holy duties, though the world censure them; and abstaine from wicked courses, though the world applaud them; so we shall have a Seal that we are taken out of the world.

Vie of triall,
whether we
be taken out
of the world.

Let us make another use of Tryall, and examin whether we be taken out of the world or no. In brief therefore, let us observe our aymes, our ends; For, *Those that are taken out of the world, have aymes beyond the world, they frame their courses to supernatural Ends, to Eternity; & labour so to guid themselves in this, that they may be saved in another world: we should steere and guide our actions suitable to our peace hereafter, we should have further ends than the world hath: he that is a worldling, confines his thoughts, within the compasse of the world. he hath no further ayme; sometimes he hath by-thoughts of heaven and happinesse; but he makes it not his aym, it is not his scope to which he directs his course.*

2

In the second place, answerable to our aymes, *Let us examine what our affections are;* Our affections will tell us of what City we are, whether of *Jerusalem*, or of *Babylon*, as one of the Ancients saith well: Ask thy love, whether dost thou weigh down in thy love? doth earthly love as a weight presse thee to things below? or is it a sanctified love, that carries thee to Christ, and to the things of God? Examine thy affections of joy and delight, of what City thou art; meer earthly actions are hypocriticall, therefore the inward affections are the best discoverers of the estate of our soule.

3

And aske likewise in the third place, our relish, *What do we savour most?* Come to a carnal man, put him to a course of vanity, he hath learned the language of the times, all your complementall phrascs he hath them exactly, all the language of the time he can speak: But come to him in matters of religion, he is out of his theam there, he savours not these things: those that are of the world, speak of the world: talk to them of vanity, of this and that, & you put them to their proper theam: but tell them of other things, they are meer strangers, and they speak as if they had never learned any thing in that element. And so those that are of the world, they converse with those that are of the same bent; Doves flock to Doves, & delight in those that are like themselves: many such arguments of tryall we may have, therefore look to your aims, to your affections, and to your inward relish, and bent of soul, which way your soul and conversation swaves, and how it relissheth; and these will discover to us our state, as in *Rev. 13.* and other places, there Antichrist is called the *Beast* that riseth out of the *Earth*; because *Romish religion is taken out of the earth*, that is, it hath earthly aymes, earthly grounds, and principles, it is all for the world: it is a fallacie indeed: Popery,

Romish Religion,
whence.

Poperie, and not religion : and thereupon the Pope is called the Beast rising out of the earth. *All the considerations that feed Popery, are out of the earth* ; Oh a glorious Monarch of the Church, to have glory, and in the Church to have all that may feed the senses, and that may please the outward man. I beseech you let us examine our selves by what I have said, and consider, that the world must be condemned: and before I leave it, doe but think what damnation is ; have no sleight thoughts of it.

What is condemnation ?

To be condemned, is to be adjudged from the presence of God, and to be cast to eternall torment with the Devill and his Angels : it were somewhat unseasonable to enlarge this point ; but I beseech you consider what is wrapped in this word [*condemned with the world*] that so if we hate the *end* damnation, we may hate the *way* that leads to it, the wayes of the world. But to goe on.

The second generall is this, *That Gods Children shall not be condemned with the world.* Doct.

Why ?

Because they are the first-fruits dedicated to God, out of the world, and Christ was condemned for them: How can they be condemned, for whom Christ was condemned ? And then, *A godly man in the state of grace, he is in heaven already* ; and who shall pull him from heaven ? how can he be condemned that is in heaven already ? we sit in heavenly places already. Beloved, to hold that an Elect Christian may fall away, is to pull Christ himselfe out of heaven, we are in heaven already in Christ ; A Christian being a member of Christ cannot be condemned, no more than Christ can be condemned, be it spoken with reverence to his Majesty. Again, *For whom Christ is a Priest, he is a King: he is a King to rule them in this world, and to subdue whatsoever might oppose their salvation* ; whom he hath bought with his blood, as a Priest, he rules as a King, and orders all things to help their salvation ; can those be condemned then, whom Christ vouchsafes a spirit stronger than the world ? Gods Children have a spirit in them that overcomes the world ? *Stronger is he that is in you, (saith John) than he that is in the world:* For the Spirit of God suggests reasons, and arguments, and motives that are stronger to a beleiving soule, than the temptations of the world are, the world biazeth them one way, & the Spirit of God another way. The Children of God have the Spirit of God, especially a Spirit, of faith therefore they overcome the world ; it presents better things in religion, than the world can afford: now those that have the Spirit of God, and a spirit of faith, by w^{ch} they overcome the world, how can they be condemned with the world ? And God takes a safe course with his Children: *That they may not be condemned with the world, He makes the world to condemn them: that they may not love the world, He makes the world to hate them: that they may be crucified to the world, he makes the world be crucified to them* : therefore they meet with crosses, and abuses, and wrongs in the world : because he will not have them perish with the world, he sends them

Condemnation what.

Why Gods Children shall not be condemned with the world,

2

3

Note.

them afflictions in the world, and by the world. Thus I might enlarge my self in the condition of Gods people : they shall not be condemned with the wicked world.

Use. The use of it is this, *That we should be in love with the state of holy ones:* who would not be in love with this condition? I may boldly speak it, (my beloved) the meanest poore soule that hath the work of grace upon it, that is taken out of the world, is in a better condition than the greatest Worldling; let a man be as happy as the world can make him, if he be a condemned man, what is his condition? *All the time that other men live, that are not in the state of Grace, it is but the time between the sentence passing, and the execution :* Now that is but a little time : The life of a carnall man, it is but the life of a man condemned at the barres, and is deferred for the execution a while. Another man that is in the state of Grace, he is safe, he shall not be condemned with the world, he is in heaven already, he is as sure of it as if he were there. I beseech you let this make us in love with the sincerity of Religion, and let us never cease labouring, till we have gotten out of this cursed estate into this happy condition. There is but a little flock of Christ, we should never give our temples quiet, and our souls rest, till we can evidence upon good grounds, that we are of this little number which are taken out of the world, till we see that we are a first-fruits dedicated to God; till we find the beginnings of Grace wrought in our souls. Why should we defer one houre till we have gotten this assurance, considering our life is so uncertain?

Doct. 3. The third generall thing is this, *The course that God takes with his children in this world, whereby they are preserved from damnation, it is corrections and chastisements ;* we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world, wherein, as I shewed you, there are these three Branches :

I First, that *whatsoever Gods dealing be with his Children, it is but a Fatherly correction and chastisement ;* and therefore it is in mercy, in discretion ; a little punishment is enough of a mother to her Child : *God hath the wisdom of a Father, but he hath the bowels of a mother ;* & therefore he is pittiful, & merciful; there is a wondrous sweet comfort wrapped in that word Father ; the whole world is not worth the comfort that is yeilded to a Christian from this, that he is the Child of God, and that God is his Father. I might enlarge my self in the point, that all are but fatherly corrections. A father when he sees his child in an evil way, he corrects him, but it is a preventing correction, it is to prevent execution after. A child set at liberty makes his mother & his father ashamed, and so if we should be set too much at liberty, if God should not meet with us with seasonable correction, we should shame religion, and shame Christ, and therefore God in mercy corrects us with fatherly correction. Oh it is a wonderfull comfort, to think, when we are taken into the Covenant of Grace, all comes from God, as a Father then; and having taken us of Enemies to be children, will he cast off his children for infirmities? will a mother cast off her children for breaches, for some thing

I Gods dealing with his Children, is but Fatherly correction.

thing that displeaseth her? no, but rather she will be more mercifull, and more pittifull; but I will not enlarge my selfe in this point, it is a familiar point, and I suppose, you hear it often: but I beseech you do but think of it, that it may be ready in your hearts, and in your memories against temptation, to have a good conceit of God: *It overcomes temptations oft-times to have a good conceit of God;* to present God to our souls as a Father: whereas the devill would present him as a Judge, as one that hates us: oh take heed of it, this is but fatherly correction. God is our Father, *Our Father which art in heaven,* (saith Christ:) Let us help our souls by presenting God to us in these colours, as a father in temptation, and all that we suffer as fatherly corrections. To speake familiarly; when we see in the street, one child is corrected, and another is not, we know he is the father, that corrects: God doth not use to correct those that are not his children, he lets them go on still, they are not worth chastizing; because they have abused his Mercy before. When God takes us in our sinfull course, and meets with us, and hedgeth our wayes with thorns, he shews himself to be a father: we are bastards and not sonnes, if we have not correction, as at large it is sweetly followed, *Heb. 12.*

Conquest of a
temptation.

Well, let us take all things therefore the better at Gods hands, because they are but corrections; for we need it the best of us: the best Gardēns have need of weeding, and the best mettals have need of purging, and the best linnen hath need of washing: God knowes it well enough, and therefore he will purge us, as the Scripture saith, as gold and silver is purged, he will purge out the drosse, and all in mercy: we lose nothing by any visitations of God, but corruption: The fruit of all his dealing with us is to take sin from us.

Use.

It is said here in the second place, that as *they are corrections, so they are from God;* (we are chastened of the Lord.) I will but touch it in a word, and that to help our forgetfulnesse in a main point. In the governing of a Christian life, we are carryed naturally to second causes; Now *all second causes are but rods in Gods hands:* look therefore to the hand that smites, look to God in all: he chastiseth us, as *David* said in the matter of *Shimei*: and as *Job*, It is the Lord that hath given, and the Lord hath taken away. And so in Benefits we should see God in all things, and think we are to deal with him. Our work lies in Heaven, therefore in any visitation or crosse, I beseech you think of it; We are to deal with the great Mover of *Heaven* and *Earth*, that hath all second causes in his hand; let us make our peace with him, *Why should we goe to the Sergeant?* we should make our peace with the Judge: make not peace with the second causes, but with the principall: it is God that chastiseth, agree with him, and he will take off the second cause: I cannot follow the point, I beseech you think of it: we forget it in our practice, and that makes us so Atheisticall, as if there were not a God to governe the world, but we run presently upon inferiour things. I go on, Gods corrections are but chastenings, and they are from him; And they are sanctified of him (which is the maine point) to preserve us from being damned with the world.

2
Our Crosses
are correcti-
ons from God.

Quest.

3
Our crosses
are sanctified
of God.

And

Quest.

And how is that?

Ans^w. 1. *Because they imbitter sinfull courses to us*: When we are crossed in our sinfull courses; sinfull courses are imbittered unto us, we grow out of love with them.

Ans^w. 2. And then again, *These chastisements, they help us to relish Heaven, and heavenly things better*: Oh, then the Word of God, is the Word of God indeed: then Christ is Christ, then heavenly things are heavenly things: then a messenger one of a thousand will be heard, as *Job 33.* then welcome the man of God all that time: when a man cannot relish earthly things, when he cannot take comfort by his friends, then welcome heavenly comforts. Chastisements therefore, they help us, that we be not damned with the world, by making us out of love with vanities, that we shall not care for them. We see they doe us good, to help us to relish heavenly things: blessed are those corrections that are sanctified that way: we heare with other eares then; when we have been in the fire, and God hath met with us by crosses, we hear with another manner of attention, than at other times. I might be large in the point (for it is very large:) rather let us think of it to make use of it: And first, to take away all objections, that I may fasten the comfort upon our souls the better, It may be objected,

Objections against the latter sense of affliction answered.

Ans^w.

Oh, *but it is such a correction, as takes away my friends from me*: I cannot have the use of my friends, as sometime in a noysome contagious disease. What if thou hast no friends, but God and his Angels to help thee to Heaven? *Whatsoever comfort God conveyes by friends, he hath it in himselfe still*: and he can convey those immediate comforts, which are most sweet, when they come from the spring; when outward comforts faile, those are the best comforts. It is a greater grace for a Prince to visit a sick body himselfe, than to send a messenger to visit him. So when no man can come to us, God himselfe comes from Heaven, and visits us by the comforts of the holy Spirit; and what doe we lose then?

Object. 2.

Ans^w.

Oh, *But it is a sharpe affliction, a sharp crosse*. Oh, but it is a sweet hand it comes from; shall not I take a cup out of a fathers hand? It is a bitter cup, but it is out of a fathers hand, and therefore out of a loving hand; it is from love, and it is directed to my good, and it is sweetly tempered, and mixed, and moderated; and therefore if it come from love, and be directed to my good, and for the present be mixed, and moderated by him; why should I complaine of the correction, that is for my good, to keepe me, that I should not be damned with the world?

Object. 3.

Ans^w.

But, *How can death it selfe be a correction, when it takes away life, that we have no time to be better?*

I answer, God to his Children before he takes them out of the world, gives them his Spirit, that they sharply repent, and put much to a little time; and God requires rather truth of heart, than length of time: as we see sick bodies shoot out suddenly, that did not grow before: So a sick afflicted soul, it shoots out suddenly; God visits it with sharp repentance, though it be short; and though he take them out of the world, yet he saves their soules.

But

But perhaps, it is but hypocriticall repentance before my death, (because many recover, and shew themselves to be hypocrites after,) And so if I should die, perhaps I should die an hypocrite. Objct. 4.

Oh take heed of that, many doe so: (as an ancient saith) He that is never good but under the Crosse, such a one is never good: he that is good under bonds, is never good, if he doth it from fear, and not from hatred of sin: but *thou shalt know that it was not in hypocrisie, that now thou hast repented in thy sicknesse, if thou desire rather the grace of God, than to recover.* A soul that is sanctified, had rather have pardon of sinne, and strength against corruption, than to have recovery: and he desires God from his soul, Now Lord sanctifie this sicknesse, and this crosse before thou take it away, for the plaister would fall off, if the wound were healed; and the Maladie would cease, if there were not a ground. I beseech you therefore those that make that objection, let them consider, whether they desire the removall of the crosse, or to have it sanctified, before it be removed from them. A true heart doth so, and it were better that wee should be under the crosse all the dayes of our lives, and to have the crosse laid more heaveie upon us, than we should grow worse under it, as many doe, and are not the better for it. But say thou, Nay Lord, rather feare me, and burne me, and chastise me; save my soul, and doe what thou wilt: that is the disposition of a Christian; for God takes a great deale of liberty with our carcases, and in our outward estate: such things we must leave behinde us, we know not how soon: therefore he takes liberty to correct us in them sharply, but so he saves our soules, all is in mercy; It is a blessed correction that draws us nearer to him, that makes us hate sin more, and love the waies of God more.

But it will be objected againe, *But I am accessarie to my own death, I have been an intemperate man, I have shortned my own daies.* Objct. 5.

Beloved, a heaveie temptation at the houre of death; but be not discouraged: for so blessed *Josiah* shortned his own dayes, for he went rashly, when he had counsell to the contrary: and so *The good Prophet* shortned his own dayes, when the Lion met him, and slew him by the way for his disobedience; and so *the good thiefe*. Therefore despaire not at that, if the thing should be, that thou shouldest fall into some course, whereby thou shouldest shorten thine owne dayes, and be accessarie to thine own death; as these *Corinibians*, who slept before their time, they cut the thred of their owne life, and put out their own candle. No question, but this was heaveie upon the conscience; I brought my selfe to it, this is the hell of hells of the damned soules, I brought my selfe hither. So when we are guilty of the punishment, and affliction of our selves, it is most bitter unto us. But I say consider the former examples, *God hath strange waies to bring his children home to him, and sometimes the furbest way about is the neereft way home.* God suffers his children to sinne, and by sin to shorten their dayes, and all to occasion repentance, and a sight of their corruption, and a hatred of themselves, and of their base courses, and to give themselves to him more thoroughly than before. So infinitely wise, and gracious is God to those that belong to him. So that, not-

L

withstanding

Answ.

Tryall of sick-
late repen-
tance.

Answ.

As in Israels
fory years
Voyage.

withstanding all objections to the contrary, the position laid down before is true, *That God sanctifies corrections to us, that we should not be damned with the world.*

Uses of all.

I

Now to make some generall use of what hath been spoken, and to end all. Is this so? Here we might stand upon a point to instruct our judgement, to shew that *all the corrections of Gods Children, they come not from vindictive Justice, but from a fatherly affection*, against that doctrine of Popery, that maintains satisfaction, that judgements are for satisfaction: A proud & damnable point: Can a man with a peny deserve a thousand pounds? Sin deserves eternall damnation, Can we with a little suffering satisfie that? The wages of sin is death, eternall death: It is a grosse position: no, they are corrections, not satisfactions, they come from fatherly affection, this is to rectifie our judgement in that point.

Use 2.

Object.

And then againe, *to help us against Satans temptations*: he useth afflictions, as temptations to weaken our faith. *If God did love thee, he would never doe so and so: why doth he follow thee with his judgements, but that he hates thee, and hath no delight in thee? And why should he single out thee more than others?*

Answer.

Nay, because God loves me, he deales thus with me, because he meaneth to save my soul, therefore he will not suffer me quietly to runne the broad way to destruction: therefore it is rather an argument of love, from that, whereby Satan would shake our faith. Doth not Satan set upon Christ with this temptation? he comes with an *If*, *If thou be the Sonne of God, If thou wert the Child of God, shouldst thou be so afflicted?* whereas indeed, because we are the sonnes of God therefore we are afflicted. Beat back therefore Satans weapons into his own bosome againe. If God corrected his own Sonne, that is the Author of our salvation, (when yet under the signes of his greatest displeasure his father loved him:) let us think, that we may be beloved of God in the signes of his greatest displeasure, as Christ upon the Crosse cryed *My God, my God still*. He apprehended in the signes of greatest displeasure Gods love, and so should we: Let us answer Gods dealing with the like; in the worst condition, he calls us children; and he is our father, and loves us: therefore in the worst condition, let us trust him, and say with *Job*, *Though thou kill me, yet will I trust in thee.*

Quest.

Answer.

Because thou maist kill me, and yet be a father, and maist do it in love; I will answer thy dealing by my faith again; therefore though thou kill me, yet will I trust in thee.

Use 3.

Again, *this strengthens our judgement in the point of perseverance, that being once in the state of grace, we shall hold out still*. For rather than Gods children shall fall away, God will take a course: that they should not be damned with the world, he will correct them. It is most divinely set down, *Rom. 8*. Neither life nor death shall be able to separate us from the love of God: neither life, nor the vanities of this life. And what if we give God cause to visit us with death? as here the *Corinthians* were visited, yet neither life nor death shall be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ; and therefore be established in the truth of that point.

Quest.

Answer.

Then

Then again (for a further use) it fenceth the soul against the scandal of the crosse; and of visitations, and sicknesses, and crosses, that we meete withall in the world: for the scandal is this, Shall we be in love with the waies of God, wherein we meet with these, and these corrections? Oh yes; take no offence at that which is sanctified by God to be a means to preserve us from being damned with the world. And the child of God, take him at the lowest, take him at the worst, he is better than a worldling at the best: take no offence therefore at Gods dispensation with his children; all is, that they may not be damned with the world: doe not onely justifie God, but magnifie God for his corrections, and after thou shalt receive fruit by them. And we have reason, when we finde our selves more mortified to the world, and to have the quiet fruit of righteousness, to magnifie God. Hath the Spirit sanctified it to thee, to make thee lead another course of life? say, Blessed be God for sending this crosse; for indeed we have oftentimes occasion to blesse God more for crosses, than for comforts; there is a blessing hidden in the worst things to Gods children, as there is a crosse in the best things to the wicked: there is a blessing in death, a blessing in sickness, a blessing in the hatred of their enemies, a blessing in their losses whatsoever, there is a blessing hidden in the worst things: and therefore let us not only justifie God, but glorifie and magnifie God for his mercy, that rather then we shall be condemned with the world, he will take this course with us.

Use 4.

Quest.
Answ.

And then here againe, you have a ground of impregnable comfort in all temptations whatsoever: a monstrous comfort, that God will take a course with his, to bring them to Heaven. What a blessed course is this, that for the time to come we may trust God, as well as the time past; that now in the state of grace, rather than he will condemn us, he will take one course, or other to bring us to Heaven. Rather than David shall live in his sinne, he will send Nathan to him: rather than Peter shall not repent, Christ will look back upon him: rather then Gods children shall goe the broad way, he will send the devill himself to annoy them, and to infest them, & to vex them. God will be sure to loose none of his; what a comfort is this? and therefore never thinke, that we can be in such a condition, wherein there is true ground of despaire; no, we cannot, we are under hope in the most wofull condition in the world, for, there is more mercy in God then can be sin, and evil in us: and he is infinitely wise to rule all to his owne ends. What if things seeme untoward? they are in his hands, he hath a powerfull hand to manage all evill to good; so gloriously wise, and powerfull is God, that he swayes the worst things: All things work for the best, for those that love God, even the worst things in this world.

Use 5.

Oh but profane spirits will object, and say, If this be so, we may be carelesse, if our salvation be made sure, that we shall not be condemned with the world, that God will take care even to bring us to heaven. Oh but the Text takes away that objection of profane spirits that take liberty from this blessed truth of God: for though God doe not damn his with the world, yet he sharply corrects them here, that by a carefull sober life they might

Object.

A profane
objection a-
gainst exor-
tation is answ-
ered.

Answ.

might obtaine many blessings, and prevent many judgements, and make their pilgrimage more comfortable; therefore it argues neither grace, nor wit to argue so, Because God will save me, therefore I will take liberty. No, though God will save thee, yet he will take such a course, that thou shalt endure such sharpnesse for thy sinne, that it shall be more bitter, than the sweetest of it was pleasant. There is no child of God, that ever came to heaven; but God hath made their sinful courses more bitter to them, then ever they have had benefit by them, though their soules have been safe. Put the case a man were sure not to be executed, yet to be branded, to be stigmatized, or to be disgraced in the Country; would he for a paltry thing not worth the speaking of, doe wrong, because he should not be executed, and have friends to keep him from that? Who would doe such a thing as that, to bring himselfe to shame for a thing of nothing? So put the case thou shalt not be damned, thou art sure of that; yet thou mayst fall into such a course, as God may brand thee: and thou mayst bring disgrace to Religion, and mayst weaken the comfort of thine own soule, and mayst make Satan rejoyce, and mayst grieve the Angels about thee, and mayst vex the Spirit in thee: we may put a sting to the affliction we suffer, we may deprive our selves of comfort in the midst of comforts for our boldnesse. Who, that hath the use of his wits, would doe this for the pleasures of sin for a season.

Quest.

An usefull
consideration.

Oh therefore when you goe about to sinne, consider what you goe about: I goe about to grieve Gods Spirit, to provoke my heavenly Father; I goe about to force out of his hand some rod, some correction; I goe about to rejoyce Satan, to grieve the Angels that are about me for my custody, to put a sting to my trouble, and to subvert it; this is the ill of ill, when a man is in affliction, my own wickednesse brought me to this; let us wisely consider this, though God save our souls, yet he will take such a course in this world, as we shall wish that we had not tryed conclusions with God: David gave liberty to his lusts, but he wished (no doubt a thousand times) that he had not bought his pleasure at so dear a rate: Therefore this I adde, to fence this truth from the offence, that a carnall heart takes at it. But to come to the proper and native use of it. Consider I beseech you, how this doctrine is a fence against the rocke of despaire, and against the rock of presumption.

Use 1.

First, *against the rock of presumption.* The soul may say, shall I be bold to sinne? surely I shall buy the pleasures of sin dearly; God will correct me sharply; And shall I provoke him for such a pleasure, and for such a profit? No, I will not buy sinne at that rate; so it fenceth the soul from presumption.

Use 2.

Again, *it fenceth the soul from despaire.* Oh, but I have sinned, my own wickednesse hath given me the scell, and Satan he joyries with my weakness, and hath toyled me; Oh, but doe not you yet despaire, for therefore we are corrected, that we should not be condemned with the world.

Ans.

A Christians never is low, but mercy is triumphant over the ill in him; there is more abundant goodnesse in God, than there can be ill in us, so happy a condition it is to be in Christ, in the covenant of grace, wherein

God

God sets himselfe to triumph over the greatest ills, over sinne, and over affliction. There can be no ill so great, but it yeelds to his mercy in Jesus Christ : and therefore be not discouraged. Now for a conclusion of all, take this course.

First of all, *get out of Sodom, get out of the condition we are in by nature.* Trust not to a formall profession of religion, doe not deceive your souls, it will deceive you : get out of the world, and get into Christ, get something by attending upon the meanes, and by prayer, and by crossing your corruptions ; get somewhat to you, that may evidence, that you are taken out of the world, and that you are in Christ, being led with a better spirit than your owne.

In the next place: *when you are in the state of grace, honour that condition,* walke worthy of that glorious calling. Oh the state of a Christian, it is a glorious state ; it requires much holy wisdom to manage the state of Christianity. If we be Christians, let us carry our selves like Christians worthily ; if we will have good of our profession, Let us carry our selves so, as that we may not goe so farre in religion, as may minister God more matter to damne us. What good is it to have so much knowledge, and so much profession as shall damne us the more ; But if we will be religious, let us be religious to purpose in deed, and not in word only.

Oh, but in the next place, I have not done this, I have forgotten my condition, forgotten my hopes, forgotten my state, regarded my base lusts, and walked loosely with God, I have been surprized and caught unawares. Then take this course, judge your selves, if you have been overtaken ; take the counsel of the Apostle, while there is hope, repent speedily.

But I see now, God is ready to take me out of the world, and I have not judged my self as I should: though I be out of love with my courses, and am in league with no evil course, yet I have been exceeding faulty.

Oh, comfort thy self, let not Satan Swallow thee up in despaire; mark what the Apostle saith, God sends this, that we should not be condemned with the world, and therefore presently make a covenant with him; renew thy purposes presently, as *Psal. 25.* All his wayes to his children are mercy and truth : his wayes of correction, and his wayes of love, all his wayes to his. And therefore take heed, that we never denie our own mercy, that we never forsake our own mercy : let not Satan prevaile so much: We have need of all this (beloved) especially in the time of temptation, in spirituall desolation, when we gaspe for comfort; let us labour to learn this spirituall wisdom, to present to our own souls the promises of the Gospel, and the relation that God hath put upon himselfe, to be a father ; his dealings to us, that they are fatherly corrections. Let not Satan wring these comforts out of our soules : But let us honour God by trusting him in life and death, & say with *Job, Though he kil me yet wil I trust in him* : So sweet and powerfull is the death of Christ, that it turns all things, even the bitterest to the greatest good : but this may be sufficient by the blessing of Gods Spirit.

What finally
is to be done
in life and
death for
comfort.

1

2

Object.

Sol.

Object.

Sol.

Job 13. 15.

CHRISTS SUFFERINGS FOR MANS SIN.

Laid open in a Passion Sermon at *Mercers Chappell*
LONDON, upon Good Friday.

By R. SIBBS D. D.



Esay 53. 5. *He was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities
the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes are we
healed.*

LONDON,

Printed for HENRY CRIPPS, at his Shop
in Popes-head Alley.

1658.

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Isaid open in a Passion Sermon at Mercers Chappell
London, upon Good Friday.

By R. SIMS D. D.



Every one who is wounded for our sins, it is our duty to be thankful for our redemption.
The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is the price of our redemption, is the only way to heaven.

LONDON,

Printed for Henry Currey, at his Shop
in York Street Alley.
1728.

CHRISTS SUFFERINGS FOR MANS SINNE.

SERM. VII.

MATTH. 27. 46.

About the ninth houre Jesus cryed with a loud voice, *Eli, Eli, Lamasababani* (that is to say) *My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me.*



THE dying speeches of men of worth are most remarkable; as that time they stirre up all their spirits and abilities which remaine, that they may speak with greatest advantage to the heares of others, and leave the deeper impression behind them.

These be some of the last words of our blessed *saviour*, uttered from the greatest affliction with the greatest faith, and to the greatest purpose, that ever any words were spoken, and therefore deserve your best attentions. In this portion of Scripture you have Christs Compellation, *My God*, and his Complaint, *why hast thou forsaken me*. A Compellation with an ingemination or reduplication of the words, *My God, My God*, to shew the strength of his affliction, and desire of help at this time.

2 A complaint by way of expostulation, *Why hast thou forsaken me?* I will draw all that I have to say into these four propositions.

1 That Christ was forsaken.

2 That he was very sensible of it, even unto complaint, *Why hast thou forsaken me.*

3 His disposition and carriage in this extremity, his faith failed not; *My God, my God,* his present griefe tyed him the closer and faster to his God.

4 Neither was it only faith, but a faith flaming in prayer, whereby he expressed, that God was his God; He not only prayed, but cryed to him, *My God, my God, &c.* This is the summe of what I intend.

Christ being in extremity was forsaken.

1 Being forsaken, he was very sensible of it, and from sensibleness complaining, pouring out his soul into the bosome of his Father.

2 And not onely complaines, but beleeves certainly that his Father will help him.

3 And to strengthen his faith the more, he puts it forth in prayer, the fire of faith in his heart kindled into a flame of prayer; (and that not in an ordinary manner, but in strong supplications) he cryed out, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* To come to the particulars.

Obser. 1. Christ was forsaken.

I will briefly touch some circumstances, and then fall upon the point it selfe, as,

1 The time wherein he was forsaken, a time of darknesse, (*the sixth houre*) in which there was a darknesse over the whole earth, and in the land of Judea especially; Neither had he darknesse without onely, but within likewise; his soul was troubled from a sense of his Fathers displeasure; two Eclipses seized upon him together, the one of the glorious light of the sunne, the other of the light of his Fathers countenance; He must needs be in a disconsolate estate, and doubly miserable, that is compassed with such darknesse; whatsoever was done to Christ, our Surety, shall be done to all that are out of him: blacknesse of darknesse is reserved for them. As Christ wanted the comfort of light from heaven, so those that are out of Christ, shall have no comfort from any creature at the last; the sunne shall not shine upon them, the moon shall not beare them, they shall not have a drop of water to cool their tongues; they were formerly Rebels against God, and now every creature is ready to serve the Lord against them; when the King is displeased with a man, which of his servants dare to countenance him?

Mat. 26. 38.

This darknesse being in Judea, did likewise portend the miserable condition of the Jewes here; and that eternall darknesse in the world to come, which should be their portion if they repented not.

2 Another circumstance may be this, God was a great while ere he removed his heavenly displeasure from Christ; he was three houres in torment; And though God delayed him long, yet he said nothing till now by way of complaint; we should bewaere of darknesse of spirit in trouble; God may delay help to his dearest Children (as here he did to his onely

Son,

Sonne) to perfect the work of *sanctification* in them, therefore submit to his will, rest contented with what ever he sends, look to thy Head and Saviour, &c. But of this more anon.

3 His greatest griefe and *conflicts* were towards his *latter end*, towards the shutting up and close of his life: though a little after he saith, *All is finished*? yet now he cryes out, *My God my God, why hast thou forsaken me*? Afflictions are sharpest towards our Ends. I speak this for prevention of discomfort, in those that finde extremities upon them: when miseries are extream, help is nearest. They will either mend or end then, the darknesse is thickest a little before the morning appears: and Satan raged most a little before his casting down.

As also to prevent security from seizing upon people; take heed of deferring repentance till thy last houres; there may be a confluence of many extremities then upon thee, paines of body, terrours of conscience, Satans temptations, Gods wrath, &c. when all these meet together, and the poor soul in its best strength, findes enough to doe to conflict with any one of them; what an unhappy condition will that be? Oh put not off your repentance to this time. But I passe these circumstances, and come to the point of forsaking it selfe.

In the unfolding whereof I will shew:

1 In what sense Christ was forsaken.

2 In what parts he was forsaken.

3 Upon what ground. And

4 To what end all this forsaking of Christ was.

For the first, forsaking is nothing else, but when God leaves the creature to it selfe, either in regard of *comfort*, or of *grace* and assistance. I will shew you how Christ was left of his Father, and how he was not left.

1 He was not forsaken in regard of Gods love, for *my Father loveth me*, (saith he) *because I give my life for my sheepe*; God never loved Christ more than now, because he was never more obedient than at this present.

How Christ
was not for-
saken.

2 Nor in regard of Union, for there was no separation of his divine nature from the *humane*; there was a suspension of *vision* indeed, (he saw no comfort for the present from God) but there was no dissolution of Union; for the divine nature did many things in this seeming forsaking; that was it which supported his human nature to sustain the burthen of our sins and the wrath of God, as also that gave merit and worth of satisfaction to his sufferings.

3 Neither was this forsaking in regard of *grace*, as if *faith*, or *love*, or any other grace were taken from Christ? Oh no, for he believed before he said, *My God, my God*. Would he have committed his dearest jewel into the hands of God, if he had not believed in him?

How then was Christ forsaken?

1 In regard of his present comfort and joy; he could not else have been a sacrifice; for as we cannot suffer by way of conformity to Christ, unless there be some desertion, that we may know the bitterness of sin

no

no more could Christ have suffered for our iniquities, had there not bin a suspension of light and comfort from his gracious soule.

2. He was not only privatively deprived of all joy and happinesse, but positively he felt the wrath and fury of the Almighty, whose just displeasure seized upon his soul for sin, as our surety. All outward comforts likewise forsooke him, the Sun withdrew his light from above, and every thing below was irksome to him; He suffered in all the good things he had, *body, soul, good name*; in his *eyes, ears, hands, &c.* he was reproached and forsaken of all comforts about him; He had not the common comfort of a man in misery, pitty, none took compassion upon him; he was the very object of scorne.

Quest.
Answ.

1

But in what part was Christ forsaken?
In all, both in body and soul too, as may plainly appeare.

First, because he was our surety, and we had stained our souls and bodies too, offending God in both; (but in soul especially, because that is the contriver of all sin, the body being but the instrument.) Some sins we call spirituall sins, as pride, malice, infidelity, and the like; these touch not the body, yet are the greatest sins of all other.

Secondly, if he had not suffered in his soul the sense of Gods displeasure, why should he thus cry out, when as the poor theeves that suffered by him made no such exclamation? If he had suffered in body only, the sufferings of *Paul* and *Moses* had been more, for they wished to be separated from the *joyes of heaven*, out of a desire to promote Gods glory on earth, therefore it was he saith in the Garden, *My soul is heavy unto death.*

Objct.

Some will grant that Christ suffered in soul, but (say they) it was by way of sympathie; for there are sufferings of soule immediately from God, and sufferings by way of *sympathie* and agreement with the body, when as the soul hath a fellow-feeling of the torments thereof; and so Christ suffered in soul indeed.

Ans. 2.

Sol.

That is not all, beloved, but there were immediate sufferings, even of his soul also, which he groaned under: God the Father laid a heavy stroke upon that; *He was smitten of the Lord*: and when God deales immediately with the soul *himselfe*, and fills it with his wrath; no creature in the world is able to undergoe the same. None can inflict punishment upon the soul but God only: Satan may urge and presse arguments of discouragement, and affright us with Gods displeasure; but the inflicting of anger upon the soul issues immediately from the hand of the Almighty. We must here therefore consider God as a righteous Judge, sitting in heaven in his Judgment seat, taking the punishment of the sins of all his people upon Christ: there was a meeting together of all the sins of the faithful (from *Adam* to the last man that shall be in the world as it were) *in one point* upon him, and the punishment of all these was laid on his blessed shoulders, who suffered for them in both body and soul.

Concluf.

Ans. 3.

1

But how could Christ be forsaken of God, (especially so forsaken as to suffer the anger of his father) being an innocent person?

I answer: First, the *Paschall Lambe* was an innocent creature, yet if the

the *Paschal Lamb* be once made a *sacrifice*, it must be killed; though *Christ* were never so unblameable, yet if he will stoop to the office of a *surety*, he must pay our *debt*, and doe that which we should have done: If a *Princes son* become a *surety*, though his father love him, and pity him, never so much, yet he will say, Now you have taken this upon you, you must discharge it.

Secondly, as in naturall things the head is punished for the fault of the body; so *Christ* by communicating his blessed nature with ours, made up one *mysticall body*, and suffered for us.

But upon what ground should *Christ* become our *surety*?

1 Because he was able to discharge our debt to the uttermost, he was more eminent than all mankind, having two natures in one, the manhood knit to the God-head.

2 *Christ* most willingly gave himselfe a sacrifice for us.

3 He was designed and predestinated to this office, yea, he was *anointed, set out* and sealed for this business by God himselfe, and is not this sufficient ground why he should become our *surety*? especially if we consider,

4 That *Christ* took the communion of our nature upon him for this very end, that he might be a full *surety*, that his *righteousness* being derived to us, and our guilt to him, Gods wrath might be satisfied in the selfe-same nature that offended. You see in Societies and Cities, if some people offend, the whole City is oftentimes punished, though perhaps many are guiltlesse in it, yet by reason of the Communion all are punished; so likewise a *Traitors* *sonne* that never had any hand in his Fathers sinne, (but behaved himselfe as an honest subject should doe, yet) having communion with the person of his Father, (being indeed a piece of him) is thereupon justly disinherited by all Law.

But how could *Christ* take our sins upon him, and not be defiled therewith?

He took not the stain of our sins but the guilt of them. Now in guilt there are two things.

1 A *worthinesse* and desert of punishment,

2 An obligation and binding over thereunto.

CHRIST took not the desert of punishment upon him, (from any fault in himselfe) he tooke whatsoever was penall upon him, but not *whippable*; as he was our *Surety*, so hee every way discharged our debt, being bound over to all judgements and punishments for us.

Now we owe unto God a double debt.

1 A debt of obedience, and if that faile,

2 A debt of punishment.

And both these hath *Christ* freed us from: First, by obeying the will of his Father in every thing: and secondly, by suffering whatsoever was due to us for our transgressions.

Some *Hereticks* that would shake the foundation of our faith, will

grant Christ to be a *Mediator* to intercede for us; a *Redeemer* to set us at liberty from slavery, &c. but not to be a surety to pay our debt, by way of satisfaction to God for us.

Heb 7. 22.

Philem. 18.

Let such remember, that Gods pleasure to redeeme lost mankind, is not so much by way of power and strength, as by way of Justice; and therefore Heb. 7. 22. it is said, *Christ is become our surety*; and Paul when he became a Mediator to Philemon for Onesimus a fugitive servant, did it by way of surety, *If he owe thee any thing, I will discharge it*: And Christ Jesus our Mediatour blessed for ever, so intercedeth unto God for us, as that he fully satisfies his justice for our offences.

Quest.

Ans.

1

But why was Christ thus forsaken of his Father?

To satisfie God for our forsaking of him; CHRIST S. forsaking was satisfactory for all our forsakings of God; beloved, we all forsook God in Adam, and indeed, what do we else in every sinne we commit, but forsake the Lord, and turne to the Creature? what are all our sinnes of pleasure, profit, ambition, and the like; but a leaving of the fountain of living waters, to fetch contentment from broken Cisterns.

2

But Christ was chiefly forsaken, that he might bring us home again to God, that there might be no more a separation betwixt his blessed Majesty and us.

Some shallow heretiques there are that would have Christ to be an example of patience and holinesse in his life and death, and do us good that way onely.

Oh no, beloved, the maine comfort we receive from Christ is by way of satisfaction; there must be first grace, and then peace in our agreement with GOD. Sweetly saith Bernard, I desire indeed to follow Christ as an example of *humility*, patience, *selfe-deniall*, &c. and to love him with the same affection that he hath loved me; but I must eate of the *Passover Lambe*, (that is) I must chiefly feede on Christ dying for my sinnes. So every true Christian soule desires to follow Christs obedience, *humility*, patience, &c. and to be transformed into the likenesse of his blessed Saviour. Whom should I desire to be like more, than him that hath done so much for me? But yet the maine comfort I receive from CHRIST, is by eating his *body*; and drinking his *bloud*; my soule feedes and feasts it selfe most of all upon the death of Christ, as satisfying for my sinnes. And what a comfort is it that Christ being our *surety*, hath made full satisfaction for all our sinnes, surely we shall never be finally and wholly forsaken, because Christ was forsaken for us: Now wee may thinke of God without discomfort; and of sinne without despaire; Now we may think of the law of death, the curse and all, and never be terrified: Why? Christ our surety hath given full content to divine justice for wrath and law, sinne and curse, &c. they are all linkes of one chaine, and Christ hath dissolved them all: Now sinne ceaseth, wrath ceaseth, the Law hath nothing to lay to our charge:

death

death sting is polled out, how comfortably therefore may we appeare before Gods tribunall? beloved, when the soule is brought into *darke places* as low as *hell* almost, then this consideration will besweet, that Christ was forsaken as a *surety* for me; Christ overcame *sinne*, *death*, *Gods wrath*, and all for me; in him I triumph over all these; what welcome newes is this to a distressed sinner? when ever thy soul is truly humbled in the sense of sinne; look not at a sinne in thy *conscience*, (thy conscience is *abed* for another to lodge in) but at *Christ*, if thou be a brokenhearted sinner, see thy sinnes in Christ thy Saviour taken away; see what he hath indured and suffered for them; see not the *law* in thy conscience, but see it discharged by Christ; see death disarmed through him, and made an entrance into a better life for thee; whatsoever is *ill* see it in *Christ*, before thou seest it in thy selfe; and when thou beholdest it there, see not only the *hurt* thereof taken away, but all good made over to thee for, *All things worke together for the best to them that love God*: The *Devill* himselfe, *death*, *sinne*, and *wrath*, all help the main; the poyson and mischief of all is taken away by Christ, and all good conveyed to us in *him*; we have *grace* answerable to *his grace*; He is the first seate of Gods love, and it sweetens whatever mercy we enjoy, that it comes from the fountaine *God the father*, through Christ unto us, I beseech you imbrace the comfort that the *Holy Ghost* affords us from these sweet considerations.

Rom 8.

Againe, in that Christ was *forsaken*; and (not only so but) indured the displeasure and immediate wrath of God seazing upon his soul, and filling his heart with anguish at this time; we may learne hence,

How to discern the ugliness of sin.

1. In what glasse to look upon that ugly thing sinne, to make it appeare more deformed to us: If we would conceive a right of sinne, let us see it in the *Angels* tumbled out of heaven, and reserved in chains of darkness for offending God; see it in the casting of *Adam* out of *Paradise*, and all *us* in him; see it in the destruction of the *old world*, and the *Jewes* carryed to captivity in the generall destruction of *Jerusalem*, &c. but if you would indeed see the most ugly colours of sinne, then see it in Christ upon the Crosse, see how many sighes and groanes, it cost him, how bitter a thing it was to his righteous soule, forcing him to weep teares of blood, and send forth strong cryes to his Father, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me*? If sinne but *imputed* to Christ our *surety*, so affected him that was *God-man*, and lay so heavy upon his soule, what will it doe to those frayle mortalls that are not in Christ? certainly, the wrath of God must needs burne to hell; he will be a consuming fire to all such. See sinne therefore chiefly in the death of Christ, how odious it is to God, that it could be no otherwise purged away, than by the death of his beloved Sonne. All the *Angels* in heaven, and all the creatures in the world could not satisfie divine justice for the least sinne. If all the agonies of all creatures were put into one, it were nothing to Christs *Agonie* if all their sufferings were put into one, they could not make satisfaction to Divine Justice for the least sin: *Sinne is another manner* of matter than we take it to be; see how the Attributes of God, his *anger*, *power*, *justice*,

Gen. 3.

and holinesse, stand all armed against it.

Beloved, men forget this, they think God is angry against sin indeed, but yet his Justice is soone satisfied in *Christ*. Oh, we must think of the Almighty as a *holy GOD*, separated from all staine and pollution of sin whatsoever, and so holy that he enforced a separation of his favour from *Christ*, for becomming our *Surety*, and *Christ* under-went a separation from his Father, because he undertooke for us; so odious is sin to the holy nature of God, that he left his *Sonne* while he struggled with his wrath for it; and so odious was sinne to the holy nature of *Christ*, that he became thus a sacrifice for the same. And so odious are the *remainders* of sinne in the hearts of the Saints, that all that belong to God have the Spirit of *Christ*, which is as *fire* to consume and wast the old *Adam* by little and little out of them; *No unclean thing must enter into heaven*; Those that are not in *Christ* by faith, that have not a shelter in him must suffer for their transgressions eternally; *Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire*; so holy is God, that he can have no society and fellowship with sinners.

Mat. 25.

Do you wonder why God so much hates sinne, that men so little regard, (not only the lewd sort of the world, but common dead-hearted persons, that set so little by it, that they regard not spirituall sins at all, especially, *barred, malice, pride, &c.* cloathing themselves with these things as a comely garment) Certainly you would not wonder that God hates sinne, if you did but consider how sinne hates God; what is sinne, but a setting of it selfe in Gods room, a setting the devill in Gods place? for when we sinne, we leave God, and set up the *Creature*, and by consequence *Satan* that brings the temptation to us, setting him in our hearts before God. Beloved, God is very jealous, and cannot indure that filthy thing *sinne* to be in his room; sinne is such a thing as desireth to take away God himselfe. Aske a sinner when he is about to sinne, Could you not wish that there were no God at all, that there were no eye of heaven to take vengeance on you? Oh I, with all my heart; and can you then wonder that God hates sinne so, when it hates him so, as to wish the not being of God? oh marvell not at it, but have such conceits of sinne as God had when he gave his *Son* to dye for it, and such as *Christ* had, when in the sense of his Fathers anger he cryed thus, *My God, my God,*

&c. The deeper our thoughts are of the odiousnesse of sin, the deeper our comfort and joy in *Christ* will be after; therefore I beseech you work your hearts to a serious consideration what that sinne is that we cherish so much, and will not be reprov'd for, and which we leave God and heaven, and all to embrace; conceive of it as God doth that must be a Judge, and will one day call us to a strict account for the same.

If *Christ* cryed out thus, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* as being our surety for our sins, we may see what to conceive of sin, and of God the better.

But above all things I desire you to look often in this glasse, in this book of *Christ crucified*, (it is an excellent book to study) the mercy of

of God and the love of Christ, the *height*, and *depth*, and *breadth* of Gods love in Jesus Christ, which hath no dimensions: What set God on work to plot this excellent work of our salvation, and redemption by such a surety; was it not *mercy*? did not that awaken *wisdom* to reconcile justice and mercy through Christ? But what stirred up this wisdom of God? Oh, bowels of *compassion* to man; he would not have man perish, when as the Angels dyed without remedy.

Let us desire therefore to be inflamed with the love of God, that hath loved us so much: All the favours of God in Christ tend (next after satisfaction to justice) to inflame our hearts to love him again; wherefore else are the favours of creation and Providence? How sweet is God in providing for our bodies, giving us not only for necessity, but abundance, with-holding no comfort that is good for us.

But chiefly in Christ, his *Master-piece*, God would have us apprehend the greatest love of all other, because there he hath set himselfe to glorifie his mercy more than any thing else: therefore we may well cry with the Apostle, *Oh the height of his love!* I beseech you fixe your thoughts on this, think not now and then slightly of it, but dwell on the meditation of the infinite love of God in Christ, till your hearts be enlarged, and warmed, and inflamed with the consideration thereof; and then love will set you forward to all good works; what need we bid you be liberall to the poore, to be good subjects, and just in your dealings: all this labour may be spared, when there is a loving heart once.

But when shall we have loving hearts?

When they are kindled, and fired at Gods fire, when they are persuaded of Gods love; the true apprehension of his love, will breed love in our hearts againe; and that is the reason why the Apostles are not so punctuall as heathen Authors in particularities of duties; they force upon men especially the love of God, and the grand-points of Religion, as well knowing that when the heart is seasoned with that once, it is ready prepared to every good duty, *The love of Christ constraineth me*, (saith Paul) there is a holy violence, a spirituall kind of tyranny and prevailing in this grace of loves

One thing further we may learn from this forsaking of Christ, *viz.* That,

It is no strange thing for Gods deare Children to be forsaken.

To have the apprehension of their sins, and the wrath of God, to be forsaken (in regard of sense) of all comfort: do we not see it done in the *naturall Son*, and shall we wonder that it is done in the *adopted sons*? We see this forsaking was in the *naturall branch*, and shall we wonder that it is done in the *grafted branches*? It was done to the *green tree*, and shall we wonder if it be done in the *dry*? no certainly.

The whole Church complains, *Psal. 44. Of drinking Gall and Worm-wood*, that God was bid in a cloud, &c, both the *head* complains of this, and the *body* too, as we see in *David*, *Job*, & other Saints; so that there is a kind of desertion and forsaking that the child of God must undergoe.

What is the ground and end of it?

M 3

First,

Quest.
Answ.

2 Cor. 13

Conclus.

Ezek. 36.
Lamen. 3.

Quest.

Ans. First, Gods prerogative is such, that sometimes when there is no great sin to provoke him to withdraw comfort, yet will he leave holy men to themselves, to shew that he will doe as pleaseth him.

2 Another ground is, our own estate and condition; we are here absent from the Lord, strangers on earth; now we would take our pilgrimage for our Country, if we had alwayes comfort and new supplies of joy.

3 Again, our disposition is to live by sense more then by Faith, we are as children in this, we would have God ever smile upon us, that we might walk in abundance of comfort; and I cannot blame Christians for desiring it, if they desire the work of grace in the first place, if they desire the works of God in them, rather than the shining of comfort by the Spirit, (*for that is the best work.*) Now because Christians desire rather to live by sight, than by faith, wherein they might honour God more, he leaves them oft-times. Sight is reserved for another world, (*for the Church triumphant*) there we shall have sight enough, we shall see God face to face.

4 Sometimes Gods Children are negligent, and keep not a *holy watch* over their souls; they cleave to the creature too much, and then no wonder though God forsake them, since they will have *fools waters* of their own, and fetch comfort else where.

5 But a maine ground is, *conformity* to Christ; he suffered for our sins, and God will con forme the *sinners* in some measure to their head; though Christ dranke the cup of Gods wrath to the bottome; yet we must sip and taste a little, that we may know how much we are beholding to Christ; and there are few that come to heaven, few that truly belong to God, but they know what sin is, and what the wrath of God is, first or last; the wrath of God is the best corrosive in the world to ease our sinne. A little anger of God set in the conscience, will make a man abhorinate *pride* and *malice*, and all sin whatsoever.

Quest.

But for what end doth God leave his children, as he did here our blessed Saviour?

Ans.
Why God forsakes his Children.

1

1 In regard of himselfe.

2 In regard of his Children.

In regard of himselfe, he leaves them that he may comfort them more afterwards, that he may bring more *love* with him, and that they may love him more than before; there will after a little forsaking, be a mutuall reflexion of love between God and a Christian: God delights to shew himselfe more abundantly after a little forsaking, and the soul enlargeth it selfe after it hath wanted the love of God; for want enlargeth the capacity of the soul, and want makes it stretch it self to receive more comfort when it comes: God doth this for the increase of his love to us, and of our love to him againe, he both draws nigh to us, and goes away in regard of feeling for our good.

2

That we may be more *watch full* over our hearts for the time to come; that there may be a more perfect divorce and separation wrought in us to the creature; our adulterous hearts have *fools delights*, that God likes

not

not, and therefore when we have smarted for it in the anger and displeasure of God, a divorce will be wrought. It is hard to work a separation from sin, sinne and the soul being so nearly invested together, God therefore uses this way of spirituall desertion to effect the same.

Likewise to make a Christian soule ransack and search the ground of all the comforts that are left him by God: It will make him riddle and search all the Scriptures; Is there any comfort for me poor wretch, that am troubled with sin? It will make him search the experience of other Christians; Have you any word of comfort for me? It will make him regard a gracious man as one of a thousand, it will make him stretch his heart in all the degrees of grace; Have I any evidence that I am the Childe of God, and not a cast-away? It will make him search his heart in regard of corruption; Is there any sin that I am not willing to part with. Beloved, God many times forgets us, that we might remember our selves, and not only so, but makes our naked conscience smart for sin, which is a quickning thing, and deeply affects a tender heart. A childe of God that is of the right stamp will not indure to be under Gods wrath long, oh it is bitter, he knows what it is to enjoy communion with God, he will not abide this estrangement: therefore it stirres him up to all manner of diligence whatsoever.

But is there no difference between Christs sufferings and smart for sin, and ours.

Quest.
Answ.

Yes, the sufferings of Christ came from the vindictive and revenging hand of Gods as a just Judge, but ours proceed from him as a loving Father, for God when we are in Christ, is changed, he layeth aside the person of a Judge, having received full satisfaction in Christ, he is now in the relation of a sweet father to us.

Again, there is difference in the measure, we take but a taste of the cup sweetned with some comfort, and moderated; but Christ drank deep of the same.

3 In the end and use, the sufferings and forsaking of Christ were satisfactory to divine Justice, but ours are not so, but only, *medicinal*; the nature of them is quite changed, they are not for satisfaction, for then we should die eternally, and disable the satisfaction of Christ; they are crosses indeed, but not curses: whatsoever we suffer in soule or body is a *croffe*, but not a *curse* unto us, because the sting is pulled out, they are all medicinall cures to fit us for heaven; whatsoever we suffer in our inward or outward man, prepares us for glory, by mortifying the remainders of our corruptions, and fitting us for that blessed estate.

4 All other mens deaths are for themselves as *Leo* saith, *Singulis in singulis*, they are single deaths for single men, but it is otherwise here for all the children of God were forsaken in their head, crucified in their head, and dyed in *Christ* their head; Christs death was a publicke satisfaction: no man dyeth for another. (let the Papists say what they will,) only Christ dyed for all, and suffered for his whole body. And thus much of the first generall, that *Christ was forsaken*.

The second is this, *Christ was very sensible of it, even to complaint* *a Conclusion*
and

and expostulation, *My God, My God, &c.* Why should it be thus between the Father and the Sonne, between such a Father, and such a Sonne, a kind loving Father to his naturall, obedient, and only Sonne? the word is strong beloved, he was not only forsaken, but exposed to danger, and left in it, being very sensible of the same; every word here expresseth some bowels; he doth not say, The Jews have forsaken me: or, my beloved Disciples and Apostles that I made much of have forsaken me: or Pilate would not doe the duty of a true Judge, my feet are pierced, my head is wounded, my body is wracked, hanging on the crosse: he complains of none of these, (though they were things to be complained of, and would have sunke any creature to have felt that in his body which he did) but that which went nearest to him, was this, *Oh my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* I stand not upon others forsaking, but *why hast thou forsaken me?* I stand more upon thy forsaking, than the forsaking of all others. Christ was very sensible of this, it went to his very heart.

But what speciall reason was there that Christ should take this so deeply?

Psal. 63.

First of all, because the loving kindnes of the Lord is better than life it self, as David the type of Christ well said; the forsaking of God being indeed worse than death; the loving kindnesse of the Lord is that that sweetneth all discomforts in the world, the want of that imbitters all comforts to us: If we be condemned Traitors, what will all comforts do to a condemned man? The want of Gods love imbitters all good; and the presence thereof sweetneth all ill, death, imprisonment, and all crosses whatsoever; therefore Christ having a sanctified judgement, in the highest degree, judgeth the losse of this to be the worst thing.

The sweeter the communion is with God the fountaine of good, the more intollerable and unsufferable is the separation from him: but none had ever so near and sweet a communion with God, as Christ our Mediator had, for he was both God and Man in one person, the beloved Sonne of his Father: now the communion before being so neare and so sweet unto him, a little want of the same must needs be unsufferable. Things the neerer they are, the more difficult the separation will be; as when the skin is severed from the flesh, and the flesh from the bones, oh it is irksome to nature: much more was Christs separation from the sense of his Fathers love. Those that love, live more in the party loved: than in themselves: Christ was in love with the person of his Father, and lived in him, now to want the sense of his love, (considering that love desires nothing but the return of love again) it must needs be death unto him.

Another ground that Christ was thus sensible, was, because he was best able to apprehend the worth of communion with God, and best able to apprehend what the anger of God was, he had a large judgement and a more capacious soule than any other: (therefore being filled with the wrath of God, he was able to hold more wrath than any man else: he could deepest apprehend wrath, that had so deep a taste of love before.

Again,

Againe, in regard of his *body*; the griefe of Christ both in *body* and *soul* was the greatest that ever was for he was in the strength of his years, he had not dulled his spirits with intemperancie; he was quick and able to apprehend paine, being of an excellent temperatue.

Was Christ so exceeding sensible of the want of his Fathers love, though it were but a while? I beseech you then, let us have mercifull considerations of those that suffer in *conscience*, and are troubled in *mind*, oh it is another manner of matter than the world takes it for; it is no easie thing to conflict with Gods anger, though but a little. It was the fault of *Jobs* friends, they should have judged charitably of him, but they did not: take heed therefore of making *desperate* conclusions against our selves or other, when the arrows of the Almighty stick in us, when we smart and shew our distemper in the apprehension of the terrors of the Lord seizing upon our souls: God is about a gracious work at this while, the more sensible men are of the anger of God, the more sensible they will be of the returne of his favour again.

There are some insensible stupid creatures, that are neither sensible of the afflictions they suffer in *body*, nor of the manifestation of Gods anger on their soule; notwithstanding he follows them with his corrections, yet they are as dead flesh, unmoveable; therefore, *Why should I smite them any longer?* saith God.

This comes from three grounds.

1 From *pride*, when men think it a shame for such *Romane* spirits as they are to stoop.

Or from *hypocrisie*, when they will not discover their griefe, though their conscience be out of tune.

Or else out of stupid *blockishness*, (which is worst of all) when they are not affected with the signes of Gods wrath. It is a blessed thing to be affected with the least token of Gods displeasure, when we can gather by good evidence that God hath a quarrell against us; you see how sensible Christ was, and so will it be with us, if we get not into him betimes, we shall be sensible of sin one day whether we will or no; *conscience* is not put in us for nought; you may stupifie and stifle the mouth of *Conscience* with this or that trick now, but it will not be so for ever, it will discharge its office, and lay bitter things to our charge, and state in our faces, and drive us to despaire one day; sin is another matter; when it is revealed to *Conscience* than we take it, howsoever we goe blockishly and stupidly on now; it is sweet in the temptation and allurements, but it hath an ill farewell and sting. If we could judge of sinne as we shall doe when it is past, especially when we come to our reckoning, at the hour of death and at the day of judgement, we would be of another mind, then we would say that all sinners (as the Scripture testifies them) are fooles. But to goe on.

Christ we see expresseth his sensibleness by *complaint*, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*

Here some Cautions must be rendered, that we doe not mistake. Christ complains not of God, but *to* God.

Wa

Objct.

Was Christ ignorant of the cause of Gods forsaking him?

Answ.

No, he knew the cause, for his sufferings were in rollerable; but taking our nature upon him, he takes our *speech* also, and expresseth himself like to a miserable man, having the greatest affliction that ever was upon a Creature. The divine nature of Christ stopped the excesse of any *passion*, he was *turbated*, but not *perturbated*; he was *moved* with the sinnes of men, but not *removed*; he was as water in a cleare glasse, there is nothing but water, though you stirre it never so much; if there were mud in it, it would soon be uncleane: we cannot stir our affections, and *com-plain*, but with a tincture of sinne: it was not so with Christ: he knew when to raise, and when to allay his affections: and though there were much nature in these affections, a naturall shunning of griefe, and a naturall desire of Gods presence, yet here was grace to direct and sanctifie the same, for nature sometimes carries grace with a stronger wind, more fully when they goe both in one current, as here: It was *grace* to have the love of God, yea, it was death to be without it, and it was sinlesse nature to desire ease, for (without sinne) nature may desire ease, so it be with submission of it self to God. For the soule may have divers *desires*, as there are divers *objects* presented to it, when the soule apprehends *release* and *ease*, it reioyces and is glad: but when upon higher considerations and better ends there is *paine* presented to the soule to do it good, the soule may desire that, and upon deliberation chuse that it refused before: A man may have his hand cut off, and cast his wares into the Sea, that he would not willingly doe: yet when upon deliberation he considers, I shall save my life by it, he will doe it. So Christ by a naturall desire (without sin) might desire release of paine, but when it was presented to him, what shall become of the saluation of *man*, and obedience to God then? Upon these considerations that respected higher ends, there might be another choice; so in things subordinate one to another, one thing may crosse another, and yet all be good too.

But you must know this likewise, that *forsaking*, and to be *sensible* of forsaking is no sinne, especially when it is not contracted by any sin of ours: it is a *suffering*, but not a *sinne*: and to be sensible of it is no sin: it is rather a sinne to be otherwise affected. God allowes those affections that he hath planted in us: he hath *planted* feare and *sorrow* in presenting dolorous objects. If a man doe not sorrow in objects of sorrow, he is not a man after Gods making: God allowes griefe and feare in afflictions and trouble, alwayes remembering it be with submission to him, *Not as I will, but as thou wilt.*

Mat. 26. 39.

Again, consider, Christ was now in a *conflicting* condition betweene *doubting* and *despaire*, the powers of hell being round about him; Satan as he was busie about him at the entrance into his office, so he was now in a speciall manner vexing his righteous soule with temptations, *God hath forsaken thee*, and this and that: we know not the malice of Satan at such a time: but certainly the powers of hel were all let loose then upon him. The truth is, God had a purpose to finish his sufferings presently upon his *complaint*, and because he will have us all receive what we re-

Mat. 4:

ceive

receive (even Christ himselfe) by prayer, and opening our desires to him. God suffers Christ to complain, and powre out his supplication into his bosome, that presently after he might be released of all, seeing he had now fully satisfied for the sins of man.

The use of it in a word is this. That God, having stooped so low to poore creatures, to be a Father and a friend to them; will suffer them familiarly, (as there is a great deal of familiarity in the Spirit of adoption) yet reverently to lay open their griefes into his bosome; and reason the case with his Majesty without sinne. *Why Lord am I thus forsaken? what is the matter? where are the sounding of thy bowels? where are thy former mercies?* There is another kinde of familiarity betweene God and his Children than the world takes notice of, yet withall remember, they have not murmuring complaints, but seasoned with faith and love, as here, *My God, my God still*: whence you see, that

Christ in his greatest extremities, had a spirit of faith.

There is a question between the Papists and us, about Christs faith; they will have him to be a comprehender and a traveller, &c. indeed he needed no justifying faith to apply any thing from without him; because he had righteousness enough of his own; but yet to depend upon God as his Father, so he had faith; neither was he alway in the state of happinesse, for that distinction is a confusion of the *abascement* of Christ and his *exaltation*: howsoever there was the happinesse of nature (the human nature being alway united to the Godhead) yet there was not alway the happinesse of vision; he did not see the face of God, for then why did he cry out, *My God, my God, &c.* Sight was due to him from his Incarnation in himselfe considered (not as our surety). Now that which made a stop of the influence of comfort to his soule, was, that he might fully suffer for our sinnes, that he might be humbled and tempted, and suffer even death it selfe. Therefore in regard of the state of humiliation; there was faith in him, faith of dependance; there was hope in him, and he made great use thereof to support himselfe.

But what supported the faith of Christ in this wofull, and full estate he was in, being forsaken of God as our Surety?

Christ presented to his faith these things.

The unchangeable nature of God, *My God*, considering whom he once loved, he loves to the end: and therefore he layes claime to him. Thou hast been my God heretofore, and so thou art still.

Again, faith presented to the soule of Christ, Gods manner of dealing; he knew well enough that God by *contraries* brings contraries to passe: He brings to heaven by the gates of hell: he brings to glory by shame: to life by death: and therefore he resolves, notwithstanding this desertion, I will depend upon my God.

Again, Christ knew well enough that God is nearest in support when he is farthest off in feeling: how that many times, when he is nearest the inward man, to strengthen it with his love, he is farthest off in comfort to outward sense. To whom was God nearer than Christ in support and sanctifying grace? and yet to whom was he farther off in present feeling?

Use.

3. Conclus.

Quest.

Answ.

thing. Christ knew that there was a secret sense of Gods love; and a sensible sense of Gods love; he had a Secret sense of God; that he was his Father; because he knew himself to be his Son; but he had it not sensibly, Faith must be suitable to the thing believed; Now Christ in saying, *My God* suites his faith to the truth that was offered to him; he knew God in the greatest extremity to be nearest at hand; *Be not far off; for trouble is near; Eccl. 2. 24.* of which I will say more anon. This should teach us in any extremity or trouble to set faith on work and feed faith with the consideration of Gods *unchangeable nature*; and the unchangeableness of his promises; which endure for ever; *wee change, but the promise changeth not; and God changeth not, My God still, The word of the Lord endureth for ever.* God deals with his people in a hidden manner, he supports with secret, though not with sensible comfort, and will be nearest when he seems to be farthest off his Children. I beseech you acquaint your selves with these things; and think it not strange that God comes near you in desertions, considering that it was so with Christ; present to thy soul the nature of God, his custom and manner of dealing, so shalt thou apprehend favour in the midst of wrath, and glory in the midst of shame; we shall see life in death; we shall see through the thickest clouds that are between God and us; for as God shines in the heart in his love secretly through all temptations and troubles; so there it a spirit of faith goes back to him again; *My God, my God* faith hath a quick eye and seeth through contraries. There is no cloud of griefe but faith will pierce through it, and see a Fathers heart under the carriage of an enemy. Christ had a great burden upon him; the sinnes of the whole world; yet he broke through all; I am now sinne; I beare the guilt of the whole world; yet under this person that I sustaine I am a son; and God is my God still, notwithstanding all this weight of sinne upon mee. And shall not we beloved say, *My God*, in any affliction or trouble that befalls us? Oh yes. In the stile of sinne which is the bitterest of all; and in the sense of Gods anger, in losses and crosses; in our families, in any distresse whatsoever, let us break through those clouds, and say, *My God still.*

But you will say, I may apprehend it; perhaps God is not my God, and then it is presumption to say so.

Who so ever casts himselfe upon God out of the sense of sinne, to be ruled by God for the time to come, shall obtain mercy. Now dost thou say, dost thy conscience tell thee, I cast my self upon God for better direction, I would be ruled as God and the Ministry of the Word would have me hereafter? If so, thou hast put this question out of question: thou doubtst whether God be thy God? I tell thee God is the God of all that seeke him, and obey him in truth; but thy conscience tells thee thou dost this constantly then, whatsoever thou hast bene; God is now before-hand with thee, he offers himselfe to be thy God; if thou trust in him, and wilt be ruled by him; and not only so, but he *will* be thy God; (we should beseech him, but he intreats us, such is his love) say he *will* be to believe in his Son Jesus Christ. Now when I joyde with Gods in teare,

Agail

Oh

Oh Lord, thou offerest thy self, thou invitest me, thou commandest me, I yeeld obedience and submit to thy good word; then the match is stricken and made up in so doing; God is *thy God*, and Christ is *thy Christ*, and thou mayest improve this claim and interest here in all the passages of thy life long, Lord thou art *my God*, therefore teach me, thou art my God, I have given my selfe to thee, I have set up thee in my heart above all things, thou art in my soule above all sin, above all profits and pleasures whatsoever, therefore save me and deliver me, have *pitty upon me*. The claime is good when we have truly given our selves up to him; else God may say, *Go to the gods you have served; men were your gods, for whom you cracked your consciences, riches and pleasure were your gods; goe to them for succour.*

Judg. 10. 16.

Oh beloved, it is a harder matter to say, *My God*, in the midst of trouble than the world takes it; there was a great conflict in Christ when he said, *My God*, when he brake through all molestations & temptations of *Sathan*, together with the sense of wrath, and could say notwithstanding, *My God*: there was a mighty strong spirit in him, But no wonder, *faith* is an Almighty grace wrought by the power of God; and laying hold upon that power, it layes hold upon Omnipotency, therefore can doe wonders; it will overcome the invincible God; he hath made a promise which shall not fayle, he cannot deny himself and his truth: put case his dealing be as an enemy, yet his promise is to be as a friend to those that trust in him; he is mercifull forgiving sins, his *nature* now is such; satisfaction to his justice makes him shew mercy.

I speak this that you might beg of God the *gift of faith*, which will carry you through all temptations and afflictions, yea, even through the shadow of death; as *David* saith, *Though I walk in the valley of the shadow of death, yet will I feare no ill; why? because thou art with me my God and my shepheard.* Though we be in the valley of the shadow of death, yet notwithstanding if God be with us, if we be in covenant with him, and can lay just claim to his promise, by giving up our selves to him, we need not feare; one beame of Gods countenance will scatter all Clouds whatsoever. I beseech you therefore labour more and more for this precious grace of faith, and increase it by all sanctified means, hearing the Word, reading the Scriptures, treasuring up the promises, and former experiments of his favour towards us, considering what speciall use we have of this above all other graces.

Psal. 23.

But to proceed.

Christ here doth not onely beleve, but

He vents his faith by prayer.

Good workes are but *faith* incarnate, *faith* working; they differ not much from it; so prayer is but *faith* flaming, the breath of *faith*, as it were; for when troubles possesse the soul, it sends out its Ambassador presently, it speeds prayer forth, & prayer staves not til it come to heaven, and there takes hold upon God, and gets a message and answer from him back to comfort the soul: *faith* and prayer are all one in a manner, when the soul hath any great desire of grace, or is in griefe, apprehending the displeasure of God *faith* would (if it could) cary us to heaven, but we are

on earth, and cannot come so neere God till we dye: therefore when it cannot goe to heauen, it sends prayer and that mounts the soule aloft and wrestles with the Almighty, and will give him no rest till the petition be granted, and it can say, *My God*.

James 5. 15. Therefore if you have any faith at all, exercise it, and make it bright by often prayer, *The prayer of faith preuailes much*: How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? Indeed it is no prayer at all without faith: great faith, great prayer, weake faith, weake prayer: no faith no prayer, they goe both on in an even strength, Christ here prayes to God under this complaint, *Why hast thou forsaken me?* There is a hidden prayer in it, oh doe not forsake me, deliver me out, &c.

I beseech you, even as you would have comfort, (from the fountaine of comfort that usually conueyes all grace and comfort to us by a spirit of prayer) labour to be much in communion with God in this blessed exercise, especially in troubles, *Call upon me in the day of trouble*, the evil day is a day of prayer, of all dayes in the day of trouble especially, *Make your request knowne to God*.

But perhaps God will not heare me.

Object.

Ans.

Yes, this fruit followes, *The peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keepe your hearts and minds*. When you have eased your soules into the bosome of God by prayer, you may goe securely, and know that he will let you reape the fruit of your prayers in the best time.

Object.

Ans.

Yea, but I have prayed long, and have had no answer.

Wait in prayer, Gods time is the best time, The Physitian keeps his owne time, he turns the glasse, and though the patient cry out, that he torments him, it is no matter, he knows his time. The Gold-smith will not take the mettall out of the fire till it be refined, so God knows what to doe; wait his good leisure. In the mean time, because we must have all from God by prayer, I beseech you derive all from him this way; pray for every thing, and then we shall have it as a blessing indeed.

Object.

But put the case I cannot pray, as sometimes we are in such a case that we cannot make a large prayer to God.

Ans.

Then doe as Christ did, *Crie*; If thou canst not pray, groan and sigh, for they are the groans and sighes of Gods Spirit in thee; there is a great deale of oratory, in these words. What is the use of eloquence but to perswade? and what could perswade God more than when Christ shewed how he esteemed his love, and how he was now, in the absence of it, environed with griefe before him? here was *Rhetorick*; if Christ had not spoken, his wounds had said enough, and his pittifull case spake sufficiently (every thing hath a voyce to cry for mercy) but he addes his voyce to all, and cries vocally, aloud, *My God, my God why hast thou forsaken me?*

Beloved if you acquaint your selves with God in prayer, then you may goe readily to him in any extremity; therefore in time of health & prosperity, cherish communion with his blessed Majesty, make him your friend, and upon every good occasion improve this plea, *Oh my God*. If we have riches, if we have a friend in the Court, we will improve them,

if

it we have any thing, we will make use of it; have we a God, and will we nor improve him? have we a God that is our God, and doe we want grace? doe we want comfort, and strength, and assistance, and have we a God the Fountaine of all to goe to? shall we have such a prerogative as this, to have Jesus Christ to be our great *Peace-maker*, that we may goe boldly to the Throne of grace through him, and shall we not improve the same? We may goe boldly to God, and welcome, because God is infinite, and the more we goe and beg, the more he gives; we cannot exhaust that Fountaine; oh let us improve this blessed *prerogative*, then we shall live the life of heaven upon earth.

But especially when the Conscience is troubled with sinne (as Christ was now with the displeasure of his Father:) then let us go to God, and pleade with his Majesty, and we may pleade lawfully with him, *LORD, thy Justice is better satisfied in Christ, than if thou shouldest send me to hell, if thou wilt thou mayst destroy me;* (for conscience must come to a great resignation, it cannot desire mercy, but it must see its owne misery) *LORD, thou mayst justly cast me to hell, but it would not be so much for thy glory, thou art more glorious in satisfying thy justice in Christ, than if thou shouldest damne me to hell: Why? Because Gods justice is better satisfied in Christ. Man sinned, but God-man satisfied for sinne: man would be like God in pride, God becomes man in humility, the expiation of God is greater than the sinne of man: He prayed for his persecutors, and gave his life for them: doth not this proportion more the justice of God than the sinne of man? The Law doth but require a nocent person; a guilty person to suffer: Christ was innocent: The Law requires that men should suffer, Christ was God: therefore Christ hath done more than satisfied the Law: the satisfaction of Christ is more than if we had suffered: We are poore men, filly creatures: that was the satisfaction of God-man: our finnes are the finnes of finite persons, but he is infinite: therefore the soule may pleade, Lord, I am a wretched sinner, but I should take away thee, and take away Christ, if I should despaire; I should make thee no God, and make Christ no Christ, if I should not accept of mercy, for Christ is given to me, and I labour to make him mine owne, by laying hold of him. Faith hath a power to make every thing its own that it toucheth: particular faith (which is the onely true comfortable faith) makes generall things mine: when the soul can lay a particular claime to God as his God, by giving himselfe to him only, then we may pleade in Christ better satisfaction to Gods justice, than if he should cast us into hell. What a stay is this for a distressed soul to make use of?*

Beloved, the Church of God (the mysticall body of Christ) is thus forsaken in other Countries, besides many particular humble broken-hearted Christians at home, who find no beames of Gods love and mercy: what shall we doe? Let the body imitate the head, even goe to God in their behalfe, and powre out your complaints before him, *Lord, where are thy mercies of old? where are thy ancient bowels to thy Church? why should the enemy triumph? God delights when we lay open the miseries of his people, and our own particular grievances before him: If there be a*

THE SAINTS SAFETY IN EVILL TIMES.

Delivered in two Sermons, The one at St
MARIES in *Cambridge*, the fifth of *November*, upon oc-
casion of the *Powder-Plot*. The other at *Pauls Crosse*.

By RICHARD SIBBS D. D. Late Master of *Katherine-Hall*
in *Cambridge*, and Preacher at *Grayes-Inne*.

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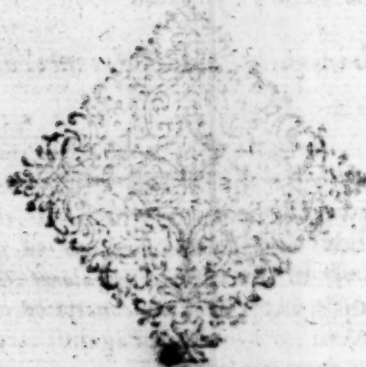
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THE SAINTS SAFETY IN EVILL TIMES.

SERM. VIII.

PSAL. 7. 14.

*Behold, he travelleth with iniquity, and hath conceived mischief,
and brought forth a lye.*



THESE be the words of David; the *Psal* shewes the occasion, which was, the malicious slander and cruel practices of *Achitophel* or *Shimei* in the time of *Abesalom*s rebellion. The words expresse the conception, birth, carriage, and miscarriage of a plot against David. In which, you may consider.

- 1 What his enemies did.
- 2 What God did.
- 3 What we all should doe.

His enemies intention, Gods prevention, and our duty. His enemies intention, *he travelleth with iniquity, and conceiveth mischief*; Gods prevention, *he brought forth a lye*. Our duty, *Behold*.

His enemies intention or action is set out by a proportion to a bodily conception: The Holy Ghost delights to present unto us the plots of wicked

wicked men under the resemblance of a *bodily* conception and *birth*, by reason of the *Analogie* betweene both: the *mind* hath its conceptions as well as the *body*. The seed of this conception was some wicked *thought* either raised up by the *heart it selfe*, or cast in by Satan *that envious man*; not only wicked men, but their *devices* are the seed of the Serpent; the *understanding* was the wombe to conceive, the will to consent; the *conception* was the hatching of a mischievous plot; the quickning of it was the *Resolution* and taking it in hand; the impregnation, growing big, and travelling of it, was the carriage of it the due time: the birth it selfe was the execution expected, but yet miscaried, and still-born; they intended the destruction of *David*, but brought forth their owne ruine.

I
Voluntary.

Quo minor necessitas peccandi eo majus peccat.

In voluntarium minus de ratione peccati. Voluntas appetit totius superpositi.

For the conception, observe the *aggravation* of the sinne, *he conceived it*. He was not put upon it, or forced unto it, it was voluntary; the more liberty we have not to sin, makes our sin the greater; he did not this in passion, but in cold blood; the lesse *will*, the lesse *sin*; here could be no *plea*, because nothing is more voluntary than plotting; where the will sets the wit a work to devise, and the body to execute mischief, it shewes the spreading and largeness of sin in any man, for the will being the desire of the *whole man*, carries the whole man with it.

Besides, when a man sinnes voluntarily, there is lesse hope of amendment, because his will is not *counsellable*: if the defect were in the *understanding* of a man, then sound direction might set it right; but where the will is set upon a thing, and is the only reason of it selfe, (as when a man will *because he will*) there counsell will not be heard: for tell a roving person that he is out of the way, he knowes it well enough already, and means not to take your direction; but tell an *honest* traveller that ignorantly mistakes his way, and he will thank you. So tell a Popish Atheist that he is in an error, he heeds it not, because he is a *Papist* for *by-ends*, not in judgement, and resolves to be so, bring what reasons you can, his hope being to rise that way: though the *will* follow some kinde of *understanding*, yet it is in the power of the *will* what the *understanding* shall *consult* and *determine* of, and therefore unlesse the malice of the *will* be first taken away by grace, it will always *by* our judgements the wrong way.

2
Delightful.

Neither was this plot onely *voluntary*, but with *delight*, because it was a *conception*: births are with more pain; *Delight* carries the whole strength and marrow of the soule with it, much of the soule is where delight is.

3
Spiritual.

Again, it was a *spirituall* sin, the spirit of a man is the chiefe seat of Gods good Spirit, wherein he frames all holy devices and good desires: the spirit is either the best or the worst part in a man; here Satan builds his *nest*, and forges all his *designes*, his *Master-pieces*, his *Powder-plots*: the chiefe *curse* or *blessing* of God is upon the spirits of men; if men be raised never so high in the world, yet if they are given to malicious and devilish spirit, they are under a most heavy judgement, carrying Satans stampe upon them; Diseases that seize upon the spirits of men (as pestilentiall diseases, &c.) are more *deadly* than those that seize on the *humors*,
Spiritual

Spirituell wickednesses are the most desperate wickednesses : finnes are more judged by the mind then by the fact.

And as it was a spirituall sinne, so it was artificiall, there was a great deal of art and cunning in it ; and in evill things the more art the worse, Art commends other things, but it makes sinne the more *sinfull*. When men are witty to work mischief, and *and wise to doe evill*, then they are evill in graine : It is best to be a bungler at this occupation : Ingenious men carry their hatred open; but this plot was spun with so fine a thred, as could not easily be discerned.

Againe, they were very diligent in it, for it was a curious webbe ; And as in weaving, head and hand, eye and foot, all goe together, so here they mustered up all their wits. Judas is awake when Peter sleeps.

And which is worst of all, they were so well pleased with the bratt of their own brain, that they travelled of it ; it increases guilt, when men upon view and sight of their plot, grow so farre in love with it, that they long to be delivered of it ; the more the soul dwells upon any sinfull plot, the more estrangement there is from God ; because the happinesse of the soule consists in cleaving to God the fountain of all good ; the more *de-liberation* any man takes in sinning, the more his soule is pleased with wickednesse. A heart long exercised in sin will admit of no impression of grace ; for the spirits are so absorpt with other designes, that they are dry and dead to better things. Many thousands are in hell at this day, for suffering their spirits to shove them too farre into sinne ; Many suck out the delight of sinne before they act it, as Esau pleased himselfe by thinking the day of mourning for his Father would come, wherein he might be revenged of his brother.

Yet this sin was not only spirituall and immanent, but *transient* likewise, it reached against the *second Table*, and therefore against the principles of nature, and against society, out of which God gathers a Church ; there was false witnessse and murder in this sinne ; In this respect it is, that the finnes of the *second Table* are greater than the finnes of the first, because they are against more clear light ; A naturall conscience hath a clearer eye in these things, here is light upon light ; for both grace and nature condemne these finnes. Yet for order in sinning, the rise of all sinne against man is our sinning against God first, for none sin against men, but they sin against God in the first place, whereupon the breach of the *first Commandement* is the ground of the breach of all the rest, for if God were set up in the heart in the first place, there parents would be honoured, and all kinde of injury suppressed for conscience sake ; the Scripture gives this as a cause of the notorious courses of wicked men, that God is not in all their thoughts, they forget there is a God of vengeance, and a day of reckoning : the foole would needs inforce upon his heart, that there is no God, and what follows, *Corrupt they are, there is none doth good, they eat up my people as bread, &c.* they make no more bones of the mourning men and their estates, then they make conscience of eating a pecke of bread. What a wretched condition hath sin brought man unto, that the great God who filleth heaven and earth should yet have no place in the heart which

which he hath especially made for himselfe? The sunne is not so clear as this truth, *that God is*, for all things in the world are because *God is*, if he were not, nothing could be: It is from him that wicked men have that strength they have to commit sinne, therefore sin proceeds from *Atheisme* (especially these plotting sinnes) for if God were more thought on, he would take off the soul from finfull contrivings, and fixe it upon himselfe.

But by whom and against whom, was this plotting? by children of the Church, not uncircumcised *Philistines*: Opposition is bitterest betwixt those that are neereſt; as betwixt the flesh and the spirit in the same soul, between *hypocrites* and true hearted *Christians* in the same womb of the Church: *Brethren* they were, but false brethren; *Children*, but strange children: Children by the *Mothers* side, all bred in the same Church, but had not the same Father; Children by the *Mothers* side only, are commonly *persecutors*; Popish spirits count it presumption to know who is their Father, which shewes them to be bastard children; The greatest sinnes of all are committed within the Church, because they are committed against the greatest light; whereupon that great sinne against the holy Ghost (which like *Jonas* his *Whale* devours all at once) is not committed out of the Church at all. Oh then, how should we reverence the blessed truth of God, and gracious motions of his Spirit? If it be sinne to kill Infants in the wombe, what is it to kill the breed of the blessed spirit in our hearts?

But against whom was this plot directed? even against *David*, a Prophet, and a King, a Kingly Prophet, a man after Gods owne heart, though Psal. 105. 15. not according to theirs: A sacred person, and therefore inviolable, Touch not mine anointed, and doe my Prophets no harme, it was a prohibition from heaven: *David* was a man eminent in goodnesse, and goodnesse invested in gracesse is a faire mark for envie to shoot at; What men for sloth care not to doe, for weaknesse cannot, or for pride will not imitate, that they maligne, sitting cursing and fretting at the bottom of the hill, at those which they see go above them, whose life giveth witnesse against them. When goodnesse shines forth, it presently meets with envy, until it come to the height to be above envy, as the Sun at the highest hath no shadow: Envy hath an ill eye, it cannot look on goodnesse without griefe, the spirit that is in us lusteth after envie: pursuing of goodnesse in men, and men for goodnesse, is a sin of a deep dye: because whosoever hates a man for goodnesse, hates goodnesse it self, and he that hates goodnesse it self, hates it most in the fountaine, and so becomes a hater of God himselfe: and if Christ were in such a mans power, he should escape no better then his members doe: for Christ is joynd either in love or hatred with his cause and children: he and his have common friends and common enemies: Men think they have to deale with silly men, but they shall one day finde that they have to deale with the great Lord of heaven and earth.

But what was the manner of carrying their designe? this cruell plot was cunningly carryed, for they kill him in his good name first, and accuse him

him as an enemy to the State, that so their slanders may make way for violence; Satan is a lyar first, and then a murderer, yea therefore a lyar, that he may be a murderer the better; he is first a Serpent, then a Lyon; and first a Lyon couchant, then a Lyon rampant; he teaches his Schollers the same method: Cruelty marcheth furiously, and under warrant with privilege, when it hath slander to countenance it. Taint men once in the opinion of the world, and then they lye open to any usage, it is not onely safe, but glorious to oppose such; and thus Vertue comes to have the reward due to wickednesse, and passes under publick hatred: the open cause and pretence is one, and the inward moving cause another; which perhaps lies hid till the day of revelation of the secrets of all flesh, as in a clock the wheelles and the hand appear openly, but the weights that move all are out of sight.

But what course took David herein? Innocency was his best apologie, and when that would not do, then patience; he saw God in the wrongs he suffered, God had shimei, &c. but this invites more injuries, therefore by prayer he layes open his soul to God; Davids prayer prevailed more in heaven, than Achitophels policy could doe on earth: Carnall men are pregnant and full of wiles and fetches to secure themselves; but godly men have one only refuge and hiding place, (yet that is a great one) namely, to run to God by prayer, as to their rock and tower of defence in their distresses. From all this that hath been said there arise these conclusions.

First, that even the best of Gods Saints are lyable to be the subject of the plots of wicked men.

Obser. 1.

1 From an Antipathy between the two contrary seeds in them.

2 Because God will not have his Children love the world, therefore he suffers the world to hate them.

3 They are strangers here, and therefore no wonder if they finde strange entertainment from them that thinke themselves at home: There hath ever beene from the beginning of the world a continual conspiracy of Satan and his instruments against God and goodnesse: Emperors and Kings became Christians, but Satan never yet became a Christian, but hath alwaies bestirred himselfe to maintain the first division, and never yet wanted a strong faction in the world.

Secondly, observe, that it is the character of a man wicked in an high degree, to contrive wickednesse: The reason is,

Obser. 2.

1 Because it is a disposition of such as are given up by God to a reprobate sense, and it is reckoned among other vile finnes, that they are full of maliciousnesse, and inventers of ill, &c. A son of Belial carries a toward heart, and devises mischief.

Prov. 6. 14.

2 It shewes, that malice is so connaturall to such, that they cannot sleepe unlesse they cause some to fall; wickednesse comes from the wicked (as naturally and speedily) as poyson from a spider.

Prov. 4. 16.

3 It argues such kind of men work out of a vicious habit, which is a stamping of a second ill nature upon the former; when as their hearts are exercised to doe mischief.

4. It shewes they are of the devils trade, whose onely work it is, to hurt and mischief (all he can) those that are broken loose from him; Certainly such people as these are the children of the devill in an higher degree than ordinary; It is said when *Judas* began to betray *Christ*, the
 Luke 22. 3. *devill entred into him*: he was the child of the devill in some degree, before, but now the devill took stronger possession of him: his unnaturall *treason* did in some sort change him into the very forme of the devill. When *Simon Magus* sought to turne away the *Deputy* from the faith, S. *Paul* had no fitter termes for him, than to style him, *Thou full of all subtilty and mischief, and child of the devill*. And indeed, there is no disposition so contrary, to the sweet Spirit of God (which is a Spirit of love and goodnesse) as this is.

V/c.
 Gen. 3. 1. Learne hence therefore, as you love God, to abhorre this hatefull disposition: The serpent indeed was *wiser than all the beasts of the field*, yet when he became an instrument of mischief, he was *curst above all the rest*: Satan labours to serve his turne of the best wits: but what greater curse can befall a man than to serve the basest creature in the basest service, and that with our best abilities? Men of a devillish spirit, carry Gods curse under feale, yea they carry the devill in their braine, in all their workes of darknesse: for alas, what should the subtilty of *Foxes*, and fiercenesse of *Lions*, and malice of *Devils* doe in an heart dedicated to *Christ*? Such men worke from a double principle, the illnesse of their own disposition within, and Satan going with the tyde of that, whose chief labour is to make a prey of men of the best parts, that by them he may either snare others, or else vex them that have so much wit or grace as not to be caught by his baits, this is a course contrary to *humanity*, as we are men; contrary to *ingenuity* as we are civill men, and contrary to *Religion* as we are Christian men, and plainly argueth that such persons are led with another spirit than their own, even by the Prince that ruleth in the ayre.

Our care and duty therefore should be to submit our spirits to the sweet guidance and government of Gods good spirit to be contented that every device and imagination of our hearts, should be captivated to higher and better reasons than our owne.

2. 10. 10.
 1. We are not wise enough of our selves that our own wills & wit should be our first movers, Every thing is perfected by subjection to a superior, where there should be a subordination to higher wisdom, there to withdraw our understanding and wills, is meere rebellion; That which the Prophet speaks is too true of many in these dayes, *Thy wisdom hath made thee to rebell*, such are too wise to be saved.

Ez. 47. 10.
 V/c. We need not be ashamed to learne some things of our very enemies, If they be so pragmaticall for evill, why should not we be as active for good? I am sure we serve a better Master, true love is full of inventions, it will be devising of good things, so soone as ever our nature is changed, the streame of the soul is turned another way, the bent of it is for God; Alas, it is a small commendation to be onely passively good, and it is a poore excuse to be onely passively ill. A good Christian thinks it not enough

enough to see good done by others, but labours to have a hand in it himselfe; and he which suffers evill to be done which he might have opposed and hindred, brings the guilt thereof upon his own head: *Curse you Meroz* (saith God) *for not helping the Lord against the mighty*, &c. What shall we think then of those that *help the mighty against the Lord*, that cast oyle to kindle, where they should cast water to quench, that inflame the rage of great persons, when they should labour to reduce al to a moderation? Of this spirit was that *Apostate*, which stirred up the Emperour to kill *man, woman, and child* of the *Protestants*, with all their kindred and allyance, fearing lest any living should revenge the others quarrell.

We see God hath stooped so low as to commend his cause unto us, as if he stood in need of our help: and usually what good he doth to us is conveyed by men like our selves; therefore we should labour to appear on his side, and own his cause and children: In the house of God there be vessels of all kinds, some are of more honorable use than others: some make the very times and places good where they live, by an influence of good: others (as malignant *Planets*) threaten misery and desolation where ever they come; these are the calamities of the times. Men may know whether they be vessels of mercy or no, by the use they are put to; the basest of people are fit enough to be executioners; the worst of men are good enough to be rods of Gods wrath; how much better is it to be full of goodnesse, as the Scripture speaks of *Josiah*, and *Hezekiah*, &c. Indeed what is a man but his goodnesse? such men live desired, and dye lamented, yea their very name is as the oyntment of the Apothecary poured out, they leave a sweet savour in the Church behind them.

Now I come to their miscarriage, they brought forth a lye, a lye in regard of their expectation, their hopes deceiving them; but a just defeating in regard of God; it was contrary to their desire, but agreeable to Gods justice: Neither were they disappointed only, so as to misse of what they intended, but they met with that misery they intended not, yea even with that very misery which they thought to bring upon *David*.

This defeating ariseth by five steps:

1 They were disappointed. 2 They fell into danger. 3 They were contrivers of this danger themselves. 4 There was a penall proportion, they fell into the same danger whirh they plotted for another. 5 They were a meanes of doing good to him, whom they devised evill against; and raised him, whom they thought to pull down: *David* sped the better for *Shimeis* malice, and *Achitophels* policy. See all these five likewise in the example of *Haman* and *Mordecai*: 1 *Haman* missed of his plot; 2 he fell into danger; 3. he fell into the same danger which he contrived himselfe; 4. he fell into the same danger which he contrived for *Mordecai*; and 5 was the means of *Mordecaies* advancement.

It had been enough to have woven a spiders web, which is done with a great deale of art, and yet comes to nothing, but to hatch a *Cockatrices* egge that brings forth a *viper* which stings to death, this is a double vexation. Yet thus God delighteth to catch the wise in the imagination of

Luke. 1. 51. their *own hearts*, and to pay them in their own coin. The wicked carry a lye in their right hand, for they trust in man which is but a lye, and (being lyars themselves too) no marvel if their hopes prove deceitfull, so that while they sow the wind, they reap the whirlwind:

Hosea 8. 7.
Reas. 1.!

The reason of Gods dealing in this kinde, is, first in regard of himselfe; God will not lose the glory of any of his Attributes, he will be known to be God only wise, and this he will let appear then especially when wicked men think to over-reach him.

2

Secondly, in regard of his tender care over his children; they are as the apple of his eye; and as they are very neare, so they are very deare to him; they cost him deare, they are his Jewels, and he gave a Jewel of infinite price for them, he is interessed in their quarrells, and they in his; If they be in any misery, Gods bowels yearne for them; he is alwayes awake, and never slumbereth; as we see in the parable, the Master of the house waked, while the servants slept. Gods eye is upon them for good, he hath them written in the *palmes of his hands*, Christ carries them alwayes in his *breast*: Christ who is the husband of his Church, is Lord of heaven and earth, and hath all power committed to him, and will rule in the midst of his enemies: He is the only Monarch of the world, and makes both all things and persons serviceable to his own end and his Churches good; he is higher than the highest: Satan the god of the world is but his (and his Churches) slave: All things are the *Churches* to further its best good.

3
Psal. 9. 16.

Another reason is, *the insolvency of the enemies*, whose *fiercenesse* turnes at length to Gods praise; for as he is a just Lord, so he will be known to be so by executing of judgement; it shall appear, that there is a God that judgeth the earth.

4

Gen. 32. 26.
Luke 18. 15.

Against Gods children will give him no rest, when he seems to sleep, they will awake him with their prayers; *They will not let him go without a blessing from him*, they will prevaile by importunity, as the widow in the Gospel. Having to deale with a just God, in a just cause, against common enemies, *his* as well as *theirs*; they bind him with his own promises, and he is content to be bound, because he hath bound himselfe first: he will not lose that part of his title, whereby he is known to be a God bearing prayers.

Psal. 8. 2.
Obje^{ct}.

But it will be objected, that wicked men do not only set themselves against the people of God, but prevail over them, even to the scorne of the beholders. Tully could say, *The gods shew how much they esteeme of the Jewishe nation, by suffering them so often to be conquered*. Hath not Antichrist a long time prevailed? and was it not foretold that the beast should prevaile? where is then the bringing forth of a lye?

Ans^{wer}.

I answer, the enemies have power, but no more than is given them of GOD: (as CHRIST answered Pilate) they prevaile indeed, but it is for a time, a limited time, and that a short one too, ten dayes, &c. and what is this to that vast time of their torment? the time will come, when there shall be no more time for them to persecute in.

Besides,

Besides even when they do prevaile, it is but over part only, not over the whole, they prevaile over persons it may be, not over the cause, that stands impregnable; they prevaile over mens lives perhaps, but not over their spirits, which is that they chiefly aime at. A true Christian conquers when he is conquered: *Stephen* prevailed over his enemies when they seemed to prevaile over him; God put glory upon him, and a spirit of glory into him. 2: Acts 7.

The Churches enemies may prevaile in some place, but then (as the Sea) they lose in another: The more they cut downe Gods people (as *Pharoah* did the *Israelites*) the more they multiply; and the more they are kept strait, the more they spread and are enlarged. God suffers the enemies of his truth to prevaile in some passages, to harden their hearts the more for destruction, as *Pharoah* prevailed in oppressing the *Israelites*, and *Herod* in killing *John*, &c. but yet lay the beginning and the end together, and then we shall see they prevailed not; and so far as they did prevaile, it tended only to hasten their own ruin, because the present successe lifts up the heart. We see *Antichrist* prevailed (but *spiritually*) onely over those whose names were not written in the *Lambs book of life*; and outwardly over the Saints, for so it was perfixe, *Revel. 18.* that he should make warre with the Saints and overcome them, and this was objected as a fiery dart against the Christians in those times, that therefore they might think their cause naught, because they were so prevailed over: but they by help of the spirit of God, understood so much of the *rev:lation* as concerned themselves, and used this as a weapon, confessing that they were the conquered people of God, but yet the people of God still. But the chiefe stay and satisfaction of the soul herein, is to look to the day of the righteous judgement of God, when we shall see all promises performed, all threatnings executed, and all enemies trodden for ever under Christ and his Churches feete. 3: Revel. 13. 7.

This is a point of marvellous comfort, when *Israel* can say, *They have afflicted me from my youth, but yet they have not prevailed over me; the gates of hell may set themselves against the Church, but shall not prevaile;* the Church is not ruled by mans counsell: We neither live nor dye at mans appointment: Our lives are not in our owne hands, or *Satans*, or our enemies, but in Gods: they can do no more, they shall do no lesse, than God will, who is our life, and the length of our dayes. God may give way a while that the thoughts of many may be revealed, and that his glory may shine the more in raising his children and confounding his enemies: but he will put a period in his due time, and that is the best time: There is a day of *Jacobs trouble*, when his enemies say, *This is Zion, whom none regards*: but God sets bounds both to the time of his childrens trouble, and to the malice of the wicked; *Their rod shall not rest over-long upon the back of the righteous*; God will put a hook into the nostrils of these *Leviathans*, and draw them which way he pleaseth. Vse 1. Psal. 129. 1. Luke 2. 35. Jer. 30. 7. Psal. 135. 13.

Again we see here, that *mischievous attempts*, are successelesse in the end; for did ever any harden themselves against God and prosper long? Let *Cain* speake, let *Pharoah*, *Haman*, *Achitophel*, *Herod*: Let the persecutors, Vse 2.

cutors of the Church for the first 200. yeares, let all that ever bore *ill will towards sion* speak, and they will confesse they did but kick against the pricks, and dash against the rocks. The greatest torment of the damned Spirit is, that God turnes all his plots, for the good of those he hates most: He tempted man to desire to *become like God*, that so he might ruine him, but God *became man*, and so restored him; God servert himselfe of this Arch politician; and all his instruments, they are but executioners of Gods will while they rush against it: *Josephs* brethren sold him that they might not worship him, and that was the very means whereby they came at length to worship him, God delights to take the oppressed parties part: Wicked men cannot doe Gods children a greater pleasure than to oppose them, for by this meanes, they help to advance them.

Why wicked plots miscary.

The ground of the miscarriage of wicked plots, is, that *Satan* and his maintaine a damned cause, and their plots are under a curse; Every one that prayes *thy Kingdome come*, prayes by consequence against them as opposers of it, and how can the men and plots of so many curses but miscarry, and prove but as the untimely fruit of a woman? they are like the grassie on the house top, which perkes above the corn in the field, but yet no man prayes for a blessing upon it; when men come by a goodly corn field, every one is readie to say, God blesse this field, &c. Beloved it is a heavier thing then Atheisticall spirits think of, to be under the curse of the Church; for as God *blest* out of *Sion*, so usually the heaviest curses come out of *Sion*: Wo beto the *Herods* and *Julians* of the world, when the Church either directly, or indirectly prayes against them.

Ps. 3.

Psal. 3. 4.

This is a ground of *staying* the soules of Gods people, in seeming confusion of things: there is an harmony in all this discord: God is fitting his people for a better condition, even when they are at the worst; and is hardening and preparing the wicked for confusion, even when they are at the best: *The wicked practise against the righteous, but God laugheth them to scorne*: for he seeth all their plottings, and his day is acoming: whilest they are digging pits for others, there is a pit a digging, and a grave a-making for themselves: they have a measure to make up, and a treasure to fill, which at length will be broken open. Which (me thinks) should take off them which are set upon mischief, from pleasing themselves in their plots; Alas, they are but plotting their own ruine, and building a *Babell* which will fall upon their own heads. If there were any commendation in plotting, then that great plotter of plotters, that great *Engineer* *Satan* would goe beyond us all, and take the credit from us? But let us not envie *Satan* and his in their glory, they had need of something to comfort them; let them please their selves with their trade; the day is coming wherein the *Daughter of Sion* shall laugh them to scorne; there will be a time wherein it shall be said, *Arise Zion and thrash*; And usually the delivery of Gods children, is joyned with the destruction of his enemies; *Sauls* death, and *Dauids* deliverance, the *Israelites* deliverance, and *Egyptians* drowning: The Church and her opposites, are like the scales of a ballance, when one goes up, the other goes down.

Micah 4. 13.

Herons wife had learned this, that if her husband began once to fall before

before the Jewes, he should surely fall. Wicked men have an houre, and they will be sure to take it; and God hath his houre too; and will be as sure to take that. The judgements of the wicked, are mercies to the Church; so saith David, *He slew mighty Kings; Ogg King of Basan, for his mercy endureth for ever, &c.* Psal. 136. 10

God hath but two things in the world, that he much regardeth, *his Truth*, and *his Church* begotten by his truth: and shall we think that he will suffer long, *wretched men* who turn that wit and power which they have from him, against his *truth* and *Church*: No assuredly, but he will give them up by that very wit of theirs, to work their own destruction: they shall serve their turn most, whom they hate most. God sits in heaven and laughs them to scorn. Shall God laugh and we cry? They take counsel together on earth, but God hath a counsel in heaven that will overthrow all their counsels here. Mark the bitter expressions in Scripture, *Why doe the heathen rage without feare or wit? Goe to now* (saith God) *gather a counsell, &c.* Beloved it goes to the heart of proud persons to be scorned; especially in the miscarriage of that which they count their *Master-piece*: they had rather be counted *Devils* than *fooles*: Let us *worke wisely* (saith Pharaoh) when he was never *more foole*: they usurpe upon God and promise themselves great matters for the *time to come*: whereas that is only Gods prerogative, and they neither know what the womb of their counsels, nor what the womb of *to morrow may bring forth*: that which they are big of may prove an abortive, or a viper to consume the womb that bred it. *Goe to now* (saith the Prophet) *all ye that kindle a fire, walke in the light of your fire, but take this of me, you shall lie downe in sorrow, &c.* The Scripture is full of such *expostulations*, and *upbraidinges*; *Mak it become like one of us*, saith God. When men will have a way of their own, & think themselves wiser than God, then it stands up on Gods honour to out-wit them. *Yet God is wise*, saith the Prophet: you think to goe beyond God, deceive not your selves, *God is wise*, and you shall finde him to be so, he hath a way to goe beyond you: Doe not many men spin a fine thred and weave a fair web, when by their turnings, and devices they turn themselves into hell? *Woe be to them that digge deep* (saith the Prophet) *and thinke to bide their counsells from the Lord*, God hath an eye to see into the most secrete and dark conveyances of *business*: God hath a key to open the closet of their hearts, let them be never so close locked up: Oh that men would more feare this *all-seeing eye* of God: and be wise for themselves, and not against themselves: It is a miserable wisdom when men are wise to worke their owne ruine: Beloved, when men have had all their plots, God hath a plot still beyond them: he takes them falling in something or other: their devices are like a curious clock, if the least thing be out of frame al is marred: God suffers them to spin a fine thred a great while, and at length cuts the web and there is an end: And they may thank themselves for all this, for they carry a justification of God in their own breasts: they perish because they will perish: and this will be the torment of all torments to gracelesse persons, that they pulled destruction upon themselves. *Malice blinds*

Psal. 2. 1.
Ezay 8.

Exod. 2. 10:

Ezay 51. 11.

Gen. 3. 32.

Isaiah 9. 2, 3.

Prov. 5. 22.

the understanding in *Satan* and his instruments; for if their malice were not above their wit, would they to gratifie their ill affections knowingly rush into the displeasure of God, and into such courses as will unavoidably bring their ruin? malice drinks up the greatest part of its fowne poyson. *His own iniquity shall take the wicked himselfe*, (saith Solomon) and he shall be holden with the cords of his own sin.

Rom. 7.

This may be enlarged to all sinfull courses; every sinner worketh a deceitfull worke, and bringeth forth a lye. *Austin* saith well, Every sinne is a lye; Men would be happy, yet they will not live so as they may be happy; what more deceitfull than this? It will be the complaint of every sinner at length, that was *Eva*, The Serpent hath deceived me. It was *S. Pauls* complaint, and it will be the complaint of all sinfull wretches at the last day; What hath pride profited us? What can the favour of men (upon whom we beare our selves) doe us good now? Sinne promisseth us contentment, continuance, secrecie, full satisfaction, &c. but doth it make good this? Were ever any, when the beginning and ending was laid together, established by wickednesse? Take it from God himselfe, (we have a commission to speak it) Say, it shall not go well with the wicked; though they escape an hundred times, yet it is but a reprimall for some further service which God hath to doe by them. *Be not deceived, God is not mocked*. When we can be more, subtil than the devill, or more strong than God, we may think to thrive by sinne; Can we thinke God will alter the course of divine justice for us? Had we not better beleve this than finde it so hereafter. (Beloved bell is for those to feele, that will not beleve; Certaine it is, that those who will sinne notwithstanding Gods justice, shall be severely punished notwithstanding his mercy. God is not more peremptory in any one thing than in this; If any man blesse himselfe in an ill way, my wrath shall smoke against him; therefore it is a good prayer, Lord give me not over to lying, (that is) not to trust in that which will lye and deceive me.

Ecclef. 8. 12.

Gal. 6. 7.

Deut. 29. 19, 20.

Esay 53. 12.

Gal. 4. 16.

1 King. 21. 22
Mat. 27.

This is the unhappinesse of us Ministers; all other professions are beleevd when they discover danger; but who beleeveth our report? Wee are mens enemies, because we tell them the truth: We labour to take away the sweet morsels from men, (their *Herodians*) and to divide betwixt men and their sinnes, which they love better than their soules; No creature but man loves that which will be its own bane; Onely wretched man seekes happinesse in the way to misery, and heaven in the way to hell. I beseech you therefore, as you would not be deceived, (as indeed who would) take heed of the deceitfull works of darknesse; Satan that tempts us, is but a lying spirit, (which he is not ashamed to confesse) and sin is like unto him; What got *Abab* by his vineyard? *Judas* by his thirty peeces of silver? What got *Haman* (and so of the rest) by their sinnes at the last? Men are usually ashamed of an ill bargain, because the very thought thereof, upbraids them with weaknesse and folly. What ever we get by sinne for the present, it will prove the worst bargain that ever we made. Oh therefore let us use our wits and parts to better purpose, if we will needs be plotting, let us plot for eternity, that is worth the plot-

ting for, Let us plot *how* to avoid Satans plots; Our time is short *Opportunity* (the flower of time) *shorten*: Our *talents* are many, our *accounts* strict, our *Judge* impartial; Let us be *sowing to the Spirit*; Let us labor to be like our Judge, who went about doing his *Fathers work*, and came to destroy the workes of the *Devill*; Oh beloved, shall we build up that which Christ came to destroy? All his miracles tended to *good*; he wrought the salvation of those that wrought his destruction: he shed his blood for those that shed his blood: Satan is all for *mischiefe*, and rather than he will not do hurt, he is content to be set about *drowning of swine*. And such are all those that are led with his spirit, men witty to destroy, and acute to malice others, who take a great deale of paines to goe to hell, and carry others with them. Those that are skilful in the story of nature write of the *Scorpion*, that he whets his tail often upon stones, that so it may be sharpe and ready for a mischiefe; some crooked wits there are which make it their exercise to vex the quiet of the land; it is as naturall to them, as poyson to a Scorpion.

Marke 5. 14

But our happiness is how to be like the Idea, the pattern of all grace, and the glory of our nature, by whom we hope to be saved: Our happiness is to bring forth fruit, and our own fruit in due season: to have *opportunitie*, ability: and a heart to doe good, how comfortable is death when it takes men so doing? The time will be ere long, when it will comfort us above all things in the world besides, that we have been honoured to be instruments of doing good, and stood in the gappe to hinder evill. Beloved, we serve a good Master, we shall not lose a good word for a good cause, there is a *booke of remembrance* for every good word and worke we doe.

Psal. 1.

Malach. 3. 16

When wicked men have beaten their brains, spent their spirits, and wasted their strength, what becomes of them at length? A *conscience* often *wounded* will receive no comfort, but take Gods part against it self. When the other powers are wearied, then *Conscience* comes and doth its office: then the eyes of the soul are opened to see what it would not see before: then sin that *lay at the doore*, (at the going out of this life) flyeth in our faces, pleasure and profit for which wicked men project and contrive so much, comes all to nothing; but sinne it selfe, and the punishment of it, abides for ever, Men (like Popes) will dispence with themselves, and conceit a latitude and breadth in their courses, that they may doe so and so, and yet do well at last, but who tells them this? Is it not a spirit of illusion? Indeed punishment is often deferred, it comes not like thunder and lightning, all at once, yet as sure as God is true, sinne will be bitterness in the end, when the hony is gone, the sting will remaine.

To conclude this point, when we are tempted to any hurtfull design, let us looke upon Christ, and that great project for our redemption undertaken by him, and reason thus with our selves: Hath he plotted and wrought my salvation, and shall I plot against him in his members?

I beseech you stir up your hearts to conceive and bring forth good purposes, Satan is an enemy to all strong resolutions and masculine *conceptions*, endeavoring to kill them in the very birth. Alas, how many good thoughts

thoughts are conceived whilst the word is *bearing*, which yet prove abortive and stick in the birth?) How few actions come to their due ripeness and perfection? I am sure our encouragements to good, are farre more than our encouragements to evill; we serve a better master, and for better wages; they may prosper for a time, but nothing is more wretched than the happiness of wicked men; it first hardens them, and then destroys them.

Prov. 1. 31.

1 Our onely way is, 1. to get into Christ the true vine, then we shall take and bear fruit presently, and draw and suck out of him the same disposition.

2 And then lay up good principles, and look with a single eye to the maine end of our life, and see that all the particular passages of our life tend to that: It is an argument of a narrow heart to be wise in some particular business, for some particular end, and yet to be careless in the maine: Other creatures are carried by a particular instinct to some particular thing; A spider is witty to catch flies, a bird to build nests, &c. As man hath larger parts, so he should have larger aims.

Jer. 17. 9.

That which we should especially labour for is, 1. to be good in our selves, and 2. to doe all the good we can to others, even as God our Father is good, and doth good; and the further our good extends, the more we resemble our Father. Such as we are, such are our thoughts such are our devices; a good man will devise of liberall things, &c. Every *vermine* can do mischief, we see some are never in their element, but when they are plotting, or working mischief, as if they were borne for no other end but to exercise the graces of men better than themselves. It is a poor commendation to be counted a cunning person for self ends, alas, the heart of man (which is *deceitfull above measure*) hath abundance of turnings and windings in it, and can suggest tricks enough to circumvent the best of us.

I come in the third place to our duty, which is, to behold, the ordinary *beaten* kindled to discover some extraordinary thing.

Quest.

Ans.

But what is here to be beheld?

Behold the *subtlety, malice*, and restless indeavour of the enemies of goodness. Is it not a matter with grief to be beheld, that one member should reare another, that one professing the same religion, should study to supplant and devour another? behold likewise their bootlesse enterprise, *they bring forth a lie*.

But especially, behold the mercy of God to his children, his wilddome in discovering, his justice in confounding the mischievous practices of their enemies, making them the workers of their own ruin.

1 The things which especially deserve our beholding, are either Things excellent, and so are all Gods works in their season, yea, justice it self. Or,

2 Things rare, as Comets and eclipses: or else, 3. Great things, as Stars of the first magnitude, &c.

Psal. 126. 3.

Even such and much more is Gods mercy to his children, and justice against his enemies; Behold what great things he hath done for them, Shall the Heathen say so, and shall not Israel much more? Beloved, we ought

to

to seek out Gods works, and shall we not take notice of them when they are offered to our view? This is especially the duty of the Saints of God, *All thy works praise thee, and thy Saints blesse thee*, saith David; The works of God praise him by our mouths, and by our tongues; Were it not for some few, that by a more divine light and spirituall eye see more of God than others do, what glory should God have in the world? God hath not brought us on the stage of this world to be meer gazers, but to extract something out for our own use, and to give him the glory of his excellencies. But we are too wise to admire any thing; it is a matter too meane for our parts to take notice of God, and his workes: you have some that can see nothing in the workes of God worth the admiring, and yet they will have mens persons in admiration, in hope of some advantage by them; We are apt to admire any outward excellency, like the disciples (before the Holy Ghost came upon them) who stood admiring of the goodly stones of the temple; When our mindes are thus taken up, it were good, if we heard Christ speaking to us as he did to them, *Are these the things you wonder at?* Psal. 145. 10.

Beloved it is our duty to observe speciall occurrences (not out of any Athenian curiosity, but) to begin our employment in heaven, now whilst we are upon earth; to take occasion from thence to blesse God; We should compare the rule and the event together, and observe what truth or attribute God makes good by that which is so fallen out; see how God commenteth upon himselfe by his own actions: and from observation of particulars, it is good to rise to generals, as Deborah from the destruction of one enemy to the destruction of all; *So let all thy enemies perish, O Lord*, This was Moses song, and Hannah's, and the Virgin Maries, &c. they mounted from a consideration of their own particular, and had their thoughts enlarged with the mercy and justice of God to others, in succeeding generations. Jude 25. 31.

And among all Gods works, we should more take notice of his mercy to the Church, than of his justice towards his enemies; because his justice is (as it were) a foyle to give lustre to his mercy; God delighteth more in mercy (as being his proper work issuing from his own bowels) than in works of justice that are occasioned by the malice of men, God is *wonderfull in his Saints*, and more in saving them, then in destroying his enemies: Considering therefore that mercy beares the chief office in the great works of God, we ought to dwell most in consideration thereof, and feed our thoughts more with the meditation of his saving works to his Church than of the ruin of his enemies.

We pray *hallowed be thy name*, unlesse we practice what we pray for, we mocke God, and deceive our own souls; Let not God lose any glory by us; Let not us lose such a pledge of future happiness, as glorifying God is; *Oh that men would praise the Lord*, saith David, who (fearing lest God should lose any glory from his creatures) stirres up Angels and all creatures to blesse the Lord, God takes it very unkindly when we do not observe (especially the excellent peeces of) his workmanship: *A fool considereth not this, &c.* Psal. 148. 3, 3.

The Lord hath done marvellous things for his Church of late whereof we should rejoyce. We should do as *Moses* did when he came out of the Sea; and as the Church (in resemblance of that deliverance from *Egypt*) did; who sang the song of *Moses* being delivered from their spiritual *Pharoah*.

We see now the viall poured upon the Sun, we see the *Prophecies* against Antichrists kingdom in fulfilling, God hath vouchsafed to strengthen our faith by *experience*, we have something to lay hold on, which may encourage us to expect more from God, and to look for those *Hallelujahs* to be sung from all creatures in heaven and earth, upon the utter confusion of Antichrist; which whosoever labours to hinder any kind of way, hinders the glory of God, and the joy of his people.

It is good to observe how the Scripture *sets out* the enemies of Gods Church in a double representation. 1. as terrible, terming them *Lyons*, *Boares*, *Bulls*, 2. as *Base*, comparing them to *dung*, *chaffe* and *dust before the winde*, that when we see them in their present ruffe and jollity, we should stay our selves with consideration of their future basenesse. Faith looks on things to come as present, because it looks upon them in the word of *Jehovah* who will give a being to all his promises & threatnings: and therefore faith is called the subsistence of *things not seen*, because it gives a kinde of *being* of things to the minde, and affections of man, as if they were present, therefore the beleeving of the final deliverance of Gods people, and the ruin of his enemies, cannot but raise up the soules of good men to a marvellous degree of joy and thankfulness to God; Who would not feare to cleave to Antichrist, if they did but present to themselves by faith the certaine ruine of that state, which the Scripture sets downe (in a Propheticall manner) as a thing already present, *Babylon is fallen*.

Revel. 18. 2.

But to come to a more particular application, suitable to the present time; the occasion and the text are as parallel as may be: our gunpowder-plotters were as pregnant in mischief as ever these were, 1. For the conception; It could not but come from beneath the vault; there was the very quintessence of devillishnesse in it; Satan emptyed all his bowells (as it were) in this project. If all the devills in hell were set a work to devise the like they could hardly doe it. There was scarce from the beginning of the world, a designe more prodigious and unmercifull, of greater depth and extent of villany: Were not this *Anniversary Commemoration of it*, posterity would hardly beleve that a plot so hellish could be hatched in the hearts of men, of *English* men, of *Catholick* men, as they would be termed, of men so born withall notwithstanding their dangerous correspondency with forreine enemies, and but halfe subjects, their better parts (their spirits) being subject to another visible head, who can untye the bond of *Allegiance* at his pleasure.

2

Neither did they only conceive this hellish wickednesse, but were big of it, and kept it close many moneths, and pleased themselves in the same as monstrous and mishapen as it was, *there wanted neither wit, nor counsell, nor combination, nor secret encouragement to effect it.*

Nay

Nay, it was an holy villany, sealed with oaths, Sacrament, and all the bonds of secrecy that could be invented; Oh horrible prophonation, to set Gods seale to Satans plot; But God who delighteth to confound all presumptuous attempts, discovered it when it should have come to the birth, and so it proved but the untimely fruit of a woman.

They brought forth a lye; for whereas they intended to have blowne up King, and Kingdome, Church-men, and Church, States-men, yea, the whole State it selfe, all at once, without any warning to prepare themselves for another world, they not only missed of this, but brought that ruine upon themselves, which they intended to others; whereas they thought for ever to have established their (*Religion*, shall I call it, or *Idolatry*, or) *superstition*, they have by this means made it more odious than ever before; As the Northerne Gentleman could say, that though he was not able to dispute, yet he had two arguments against Popery, *equivocation*, and the *Gunn powder Treason*; But they turne it off easily (as they think) Alas, it was but a plot of a company of unfortunate; gentlemen whereas if it had succeeded well, they would have had other termes for it; successefull villany goeth for vertue,

3

Well, *the net is broken*, and we are delivered; God thought of us when we thought not of him, and awaked for us when we were asleep (here is a place for behold) for what a miserable face of things would there have been, if their plot had succeeded?

4

Now what return shall we make for all this? they conceived mischief, let us conceive praise, and travel of holy resolutions to give up our selves to God, who hath given us our King, our State, yea our selves to our selves: He hath given us our lives more than once every one of us in particular especially in the last heavie visitation; but had it not been better for many in regard of their owne particular, to have been swept away in that deluge, than to live longer to treasure up further wrath to themselves? Many are not content to goe to hell alone, but they will draw as many others as they can into their fellowship here, and torment hereafter. Oh beloved, the preservation of such, is but a reservation to further judgement. What got the King of *Sodom* by being delivered once, and then after to be consumed with fire and brimstone from heaven, *Genesis 19?* What got *Pharaoh* by being delivered from ten plagues, and then to perish in the Sea? What are all our temporall deliverances, if we live still in sin, go on in sin, die in our sins, and so perish eternally? Blessings, without returne of due thanks, increase the guilt of sinne, and the increase of guilt canfeth the increase of judgements. *Exodus 14?*

The most proper *homogeniall* way of thankes, is to stirre up our selves to a greater hatred of that *Religion*: they would faine free it, as if it were the fault of some persons onely: but alas, what can be else distilled from those dangerous points they hold, (as that, *the Pope hath temporall jurisdiction over Princes*, that he may excommunicate them; that he may (out of fulnesse of power) dispence with the oath of allegiance; that he cannot erre; that subjection to him is a point of absolute necessity to salvation, &c. What, I say,

say,

say, can be distilled from these opinions, but treason in a people that live under a Prince of a contrary Religion? were not the dispositions of many of them better than their positions.

However perhaps the present Pope may be more moderate and neuterall, yet this is the infusion of their religion where ever it prevails, and these tenents shall be acted and in full force when they please, and it will please them when it shall be for the advantage of the *Catholick cause*; This was *Bellarmines* tenent, *If the Pope should erre in commanding vice or forbidding vertue, the Church is bound to beleve vice to be good, and vertue to be ill, or else it should sinne against conscience; for it is bound to beleve what he commands*: Thus they make the judgement of man the rule of truth and falsehood, good and evil; Whereas truth is truth, and that which is false is false, whether men think so or no; there is an intrinsicall evil in evil, which the judgement of any man cannot take away; and the truth and goodnesse of things, stands upon eternal grounds, not flexible or alterable by the will of any creature; otherwise it were all one as to think the course of the *Sun* should be guided by a *dyall*; Is there any hope of their coming to us, when they had rather have the rules of nature and Religion (which are as unmoveable as a mountain of brass) to vary, than be thought to confesse that the Pope may erre? which indeed is the ground and leading error of all. But how should we expect our words should prevail, when as the great workes of God prevail not at all with them? The efficacy of error is so strong in many, that though they should see the viall powred out upon the throne of the beast, yet will they not repent.

Revel. 16.

For our selves, we cannot better shew our thankfulness for this deliverance, by means whereof we enjoy our lives and our Religion, than to preserve that truth (that is grounded upon the foundation of truth) which hath been derived unto us from those that went before, who held out the same truth; that hath been sealed by the blood of so many *Martyrs* that hath been established by the Authority of gracious Princes, that God hath given witness to by so many deliverances, that concurs with the confessions of all Reformed Churches, that God hath blessed with a constant tenour of peace, even to the rejoycing of all Neighbour Churches, to the envie of our enemies, and to the admiration of all, &c.

Daniel 3.

We see all Countreyes round about us in a confusion, and we (as it were the three young men in the fiery furnace) safe, without so much as smoak or smell of fire, as if we were the onely people of Gods delight; Now what is that which God careth most for amongst us but his truth? which if we suffer (as much as in us lyeth) to take any detriment, God may justly make us the spectacles of his wrath to others, as others have been to us. Beloved, God hath a cause and a people in the world, which he esteemeth more than all the world besides: let us therefore own Gods cause and people: his side one day will prove the better side.

Jer. 2. 31.

I beseech you consider, what hurt have we ever had by the reformation of Religion? hath it come naked unto us? hath it not been attended with peace and prosperity? hath God been a barren wilderness to us? hath not

not God been a wall of fire about us? which if he had not been, it is not the water that compasseth our *Iſland* could have kept us: So long as we keep Christs truth, Christ will keep us: Otherwise (trust to it) Christ and his truth will leave us. No nation under heaven hath so much cause to say *Behold*, as we have; Men are ready upon all occasions to be sensible of civill grievances, as in *Solomons time*) but we should be sensible of the *spirituall* favours we enjoy; If we look upon other Kingdomes abroad, what nation under heaven hath the like cause to bleſs God for *Religion*, for *Prince*, for *peace*, &c. as we have? Beloved, we cannot better deserve of our *King*, *Church*, and *State*, than to give up our lives to God, who hath thus bleſsed us; The greatest enemies of a Church and State, are those that provoke the *highest Majesty* of heaven, by obstinate courses against the light that shineth in their own hearts. It is seriously to be considered what *Samuel* saith to the people; and therefore, if not for love of our selves, yet for the love of our *King*, *Religion*, and *State*, let us take heed of provoking courses, and take heed of tyring the patience of God over-long. To conclude all, it is prayer that gets, but thankfulnesse witnessed by obedience that keeps blessings; and what can our thoughts devise, our tongues utter, or our lives expresse, better than the praise of our good God, that even loadeth us with his benefits? that so God may delight still to shew himself unto us, in the wayes of his mercy, and think thoughts of love towards us, and dwell amongst us to the worlds end.

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THE



THE SAINTS SAFETY IN EVILL TIMES.

Preached at *Pauls Crosse* upon a speciall solemn
occasion, *Aug. 5.*

SERM. IX.

II TIM. 4. 17, 18.

*Notwithstanding the Lord assisted me, and strengthened me, that
by me the preaching might be fully known; and I was delivered
out of the mouth of the Lion :*

*And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work, and preserve
me to his heavenly Kingdome. To whom be glory for ever,
Amen.*



THE words that I have read, do containe in briefe these
particulars.

1 *Pauls experience of Gods love of him, in his deli-*
rance past.

2 *His assured hope built upon this experience for time to*
come, set downe two branches :

1. *The Lord will deliver me from every evil work.*
2. *He will preserve me to his heavenly Kingdome.*

3 The issue he maketh of both: as they flow from Gods grace, so he ascribes him the glory of both: [To whom be glory for ever: Amen.

For the first: I finde that most both Ancient and Moderne Writers, by Lion, understand Nero, that cruell Tyrant, thirsty of blood, especially of Christians: Some also understand it to be a proverbiall speech, to expresse extremity of danger; both which are true: but if we take the words in the just bredth of the Apostles intent, we may by Lion, understand the whole united company of his cruell enemies; as David in many places hath the like: and by the mouth of the Lion, the present danger he was in, by reason of their cruell malice, Whence observe,

- 1 That the enemies of the truth, are
 { soft for power,
 { alwaies for malice } } Lions.
- 2 That God suffers his dearest children to fall into the mouthes of these Lions.
- 3 That in this extremity of danger, God delivers them.

For the second: his hope built upon his experience: both Branches thereof hath its limitation and extent: The Lord shall deliver me; not from evill suffering, but from evill works: this he could boldly build on: he could not conjecture what he should suffer, because that was in the power of others: but he could build upon this, what God would give him grace to doe: and so he limits his confidence; He will deliver me from evill works, and he will preserve me; from what? from danger? from death? no: here is the limitation: He will preserve me to his heavenly Kingdome. He will not preserve me from death; (and yet he will doe that whilst I can doe him service by my life:) but sure I am, he will preserve me beyond death, to a state of security and happinesse: He will preserve me to his heavenly Kingdome.

And then for the third: after his experience, confidence, and hope well built, (as his fashion is) when his heart was once warmed, he breaks out into thanksgiving, in the consideration of Gods favours past, and to come; his tongue is large thereupon, and God hath the fruit of it: To whom be glory for ever: and lastly, he seals up all with the word, Amen,

[I was delivered out of the mouth of the Lion, &c.] Beloved, by nature we are all Lions, and nothing will alter us, save the effectual knowledge of Christ; Education may civilize, but not subdue: A sound knowledge of Gods Truth, hath a changing power; for (when the spirit becomes tender, and when the heart, which lyes in a cursed estate, under and in danger of the wrath of a just God, whose eye cannot spare iniquity unrepented of, is cited and affrighted effectually by the spirit of bondage) it will cast down, and pull sorrow from the strongest heart: making it melting and tender.

Again, in this estate, when the soul hath felt favour shining upon it, when the eye is opened; to see the high prerogatives, and exceeding riches

riches of Christ; when we finde our selves that we are delivered from the *Lions mouth*; we cannot but shew that pittie to others, which we felt from God our selves. *Paul* thirsts as eagerly after the conversion of others now, as ever he did for their blood before. The *Jaylor* also, a man by nature, custome, and calling, hardned in the practice of cruelty; yet after he had felt the power of Gods blessed truth, shewed forth those bowels of pittie, he felt from Christ, which were shut before.

Acts 9. 22.
Acts 16. 33.

Let us then be thankfull, that God hath changed us from being *Lions*; and with meeknesse submit our selves to Gods ordinances: desiring him to write his Law, not onely in our understandings, but in our very hearts and bowels; that we may not onely know, that we should walke harmlesse and full of good; but be so indeed: resembling him by whom we hope to be saved, in a right serviceable plyablenesse to all duties of love.

Jer. 31. 33.

And because our imperfect measure of mortification in this life, hinders us from a full content in one anothers communion; let this make us the more willing to be translated to Gods holy Mount, where, being purged from all such lusts, as hinder our peace and love, we shall fully enjoy one another, without the least falsenesse or distrust: then shall we see totall accomplishment of these promises, which are but in part fulfilled in this life.

That God suffereth his children to fall into the mouth of Lions, or into some danger proportionable, wherein they shall see no helpe from him, is a truth cleare as the Sunne. The History of the Church in all ages shewes as much: Was not Christ in the mouth of the *Lion*, so soone as born, when *Herod* sought to kill him? Did not Satan, and all the spirituall powers of Hell daily come about him, like ramping and roaring Lions? And hath it not been thus with Gods Church from *Abel* to this present, as appeares by the children of Israel in *Egypt*, at the red sea, and in their journey to *Canaan*, being environed round about with cruell enemies, and dangers on every side, like *Daniel* in the midst of Lions. So far God gave them up to the power of their enemies, that the wisest of the *Heathen* judged them a forlorne people, hatefull to God and men. And we see *Job* and *David*, so neare, as there was but a step betweene them and death.

Objer. 1.

Mat. 2. 13.

Psal. 44. 9.

Besides, God often awakens the consciences of his children and exerciseth them with spirituall conflicts; their sins, as so many Lions, stand up against them, ready to teare their soules: Nay, rather than those that belong to God shal want that which wil drive them unto him, God himsef will be a Lion unto them, as unto *Ephraim*, *Hosea* 5. 14. which made *David* pray, *O Lord rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.* Of all the troubles which a child of God undergoeth in his way to heaven, these bring him lowest; when the body is vexed, and spirit troubled, it is much; but when God frowns, when neither Heaven nor Earth yeelds comfort to a distressed soul, no evill in the world is like to this; Imagine the horreur and straits of such a soul (when all things seem against it and it self against it self) as near to the paines of the very damned in hell.

Psal. 6. 1.

1 The reasons of this dispensation of God are, 1. Because we are so desperately addicted to present things, & so prone to put confidence in the *arme of flesh*; that unlesse God driveth us from these holds (by casting us into a perplexed estate) we shall never know what it is to live by faith in God alone, when all other props are pulled away, and when the stream of things seeme to crosse unto us. That God therefore may traine us up to live the spirituall life of the just (*which is by faith in him*;) when all else faile, he suffereth us to fall into the *Lions mouth*; that so our prayers which are the flame of faith, may be more ardent and piercing, rather cryes than words: *Why cryest thou unto me*, saith God to *Moses*? when was this? even when he knew not way to turne him. It was out of the depths that *David* cryed most earnestly unto God: and Christ in the dayes of his flesh cryed unto God with strong cryes, and teares in a deep distresse, and was also heard in that which he feared: strong troubles force from the afflicted strong cryes: even experience shewes, in prosperity, and a full estate, how faint and cold the prayers and desires of men are.

Psal: 14. 15.

Psal. 130. 1.

Heb. 5. 7.

2 Besides, it is meet that the secrets of mens hearts should be discovered: for when all is quiet, we know not the falsehood of our own hearts. Some over-value their strength as *Peter*: others under-prize themselves, and the gifts and graces of Gods Spirit in them, thinking that they want *Faith, Patience, Love, &c.* who yet, when God calleth them out to the crosse, shine forth in the eyes of others, in the example of a meeke and faithfull subjection. The wisdom of God therefore judgeth it meet, that there should be times of sifting, that both the Church & our selves may know, what good or ill is in us: what soundnesse or loosenesse remains in our hearts. When therefore we are wanting in fanning our selves, God in love takes the fanne into his hand.

Mat. 26. 33.

1. 30. 40

1. 30. 40

It is likewise bechoovefull, that false Brethren may be discovered. Afflictions are well called tryalls, because then it is known what metall men are made of, whether Pure or Reprobate silver: think it not strange then, when our estate seems desperate: it is but with us after the manner of Gods dearest ones: why should we have a severed condition from them? Remember this, that God, as he suffers his children to fall into the *Lions mouth*, so he delivers them out: and that he never leaves his (especially in extremity) but in fit case of soul, to receive the greatest comfort, and to render him the greatest glory; for then it is known to be Gods work; our extremity is his opportunity: God will especially shew himselfe at such a time, and make it appeare that the Church stands not by mans strength: When Christians are at a losse, and know not which way to turne themselves, then is Gods nearest hand, and careth most for them.

1. 30. 40

And this the Lord doth, both for the greater shame of those that commit mischief, when they make themselves surest to bring their wicked plots and purposes to passe, then their designs are most frustrated.

As also, to draw on others, not yet called: that they seeing Gods immediate

diate care over his Church and children, may come in and obtaine like protection and deliverance.

The manner how God delivereth his Children out of the Lions mouth, is divers: 1 By suspending the malice for the time: as in Noahs Arke, the fiercenesse of the wild creatures was stopt by Divine Power, from preying upon the tamer: so the Lions mouthes were stopt from preying upon Daniel in the Lions Den.

Divers wayes how God delivers from the Lions mouth, Dan. 6. 22.

2 By stirring up one Lion against another; as the Persians against the Babylonians: Grecians against Persians: Romanes against the Grecians; and the other barbarous nations, as the Gothes and Vandals, against them: so whilst Lions spit their fussy one upon another, the Sheepe are quier. Thus the Turke, and other enemies have kept Popish Princes from raging, and tyranizing over the Church, to the height of their malice.

3 By casting something unto these Lions, to divert them another way from their intend prey; as when a man is in danger, a Dogge is cast unto the Lion: Thus when Saul was ready to devoure David, the Philistines made a breach upon him, invaded the Land, and turned his fury another way.

2 Sam. 23. 27.

4 By altering and changing Lions to be Lambes: as when Paul was set upon havock and mischief, God, by changing his heart, gave the Churches cause to glorifie God for him; of whom before they were most afraid.

5. God shews himselfe a Lion to these Lions; by breaking their teeth and jaw-bones, striking them with sudden and fearfull judgements; as Herod, and the persecuting Emperors: and as in 88, when God with his foure winds fought for us against the enemies of his truth.

Acts 12. 23.

6 By making them Lions to themselves: witness Achitophel, Saul, and other such like enemies of Gods Children.

Againe, God maketh them friends, without changing their disposition, by putting into their hearts some conceit for the time, which inclineth them to favour: as in Nehemiah, God put it into the Kings heart to favour his people: Esau was not changed, only God for the time changed his affections to favour Jacob; so God put it into the hearts of many, (groundedly naught) to favour the best persons.

Nehem. 2. 8; Gen. 33. 4.

Lastly, God maketh his own children sometimes Lions to their Adversaries:

For the Image of God shining in his children, hath a secret Majesty in it, and striketh an awe upon wicked men, so Pharoah at length could not endure to see Moses and Aaron any more; and Felix trembled whilst Paul disputed of temperance and judgement.

Exod. 10. 28.

Acts 24. 25.

Thus we see the Lord knows how to deliver his, and can if he will; and will doe it in their extremities, when is most for his glory, his peoples comfort, and confusion of his own and their enemies: never despaire therefore of thy selfe, or the Church of God; it shall rather than faile breed in the Lions den; Paul salutes the Philippians from the Church in Caesars house, a place (in appearance) little fitter for a Church, than hell it selfe; what though things seeme past recovery abroad? when they are at the worst, then are they nearest mending. When the taske of
brick

Vic of instruction and consolation,

Phil. 4. 22.

Exodus 5. 11. brick was doubled by *Pharoah* upon *Israel*; then came *Moses* to worke out their deliverance; when the *Jewes* heard newes of their liberty to return from captivity; they were as those that dreamed; they could not suddenly beleieve it, it seemed so strange a thing in that their hopelesse estate.

Psal. 126. 1.

Learn we then, from this dealing of God with his people, in the midst of all extremities to alledge unto God the extremity we are in; *Helpe Lord, for vaine is the help of man*, is a prevailing argument. Alledge the pride of enemies, the presumption of those that feare not God, &c. and that he onely can give issue from death when he will: And as God brings us to heaven by contraries, so let us in one contrary beleieve another; hope against hope; In misery, looke for mercy: in death for life: in guiltinesse for forgiveness. Learn to wrastle with God, when he seemeth thy enemy: oppose unto God his former dealings, his nature, his promise, &c. *Job* had learned this, *Though he kill me, yet will I trust in him*. Be of *Jacobs* resolution, *I will not leave hold of thee, untill I get a blessing*; whatsoever we are stript of, let us never forsake our own mercy. This one word, *I despair*, takes away God, and *Christ* all at once; We must remember, *Our finnes are the finnes of men, but his mercy is the mercy of God*, who will never leave us, but be with us whilst we are with him. *The world*, and all comforts in it, leave a man when they can have no more use of him, nor he of them; *Satan* leaves his sworne vassals at their wits end, when he hath brought them into danger; But blessed be for ever our gracious God; then of all other times he is nearest to help us, when we stand most in need of him. He was never nearer *Moses*,

Iob 13. 15.

Gen. 32. 26.]

Jonah 2. 8.

Exodus 3. 2.

Gen. 18. 11.

Afts 16. 26.

2 Cor. 4. 9.

Luke 1. 43.

Habak. 2. 3.

Differences of
godly, and
wicked.

Psal. 73. 11.

than when *Moses* seemed furthest from comfort; never nearer *Jacob*, than when heaven was his Canopic, and a stone his pillow; never nearer *Joseph*, than when in prison; *Jonas*, than in the belly of the Whale, for God went downe with him; never nearer *Paul*, than when in the Dungeon: A Christian is not alone, when left alone: not forsaken, when forsaken; God and his Angels supply them the want of other comforts. Is it not a greater comfort, that a Prince should come in Person to a subject, and cheare him up, than send a meaner man? And whence is this to me, (said *Elizabeth*) that the mother of my Lord should come unto me? Is it not the greatest comfort to a Christian soul, when God in want of meanes, comes immediately himselfe unto us, and comforts us by his Spirit? for in defects of second causes, comforts are ever sweetest; therefore in all extremities, let us wait and hope still for mercy; *If the vision stay* (saith *Habakkuk*) *wait, for it will come*.

This is a maine difference betwixt the Child of God, and a person destitute of sound grace: for the Child of God in extremity recovers himselfe; as *David* after a great conflict gets still the upper hand: *Tet my soule keepe thou silence unto God: for God is yet good to Israel*: as if hee should say, Though when I look upon my present outward condition, I stagger; yet when I consider more deeply of his dealing, I am resolved, *God is good to Israel*; thus after much tossing, they get up upon that rock which is higher then they: But those, who are not upright hearted, in any

any great extremity sink down with despaire, as heavy bodies to the Center of the Earth, without stop. The reason is, in their best estate they never were acquainted with relying upon God, but bore themselves up with fleshly helpes, which being taken away they must needs fall down right: But a sincere Christian in midst of his flourishing estate, acquainteth himselfe with God, and sets not his heart upon present things: *Job* sayes, *that which he feared in his best case, that befell unto him*: Therefore they can rest upon Gods mercy, when other props are taken away.

Job. 3. 25.

Yet there be divers degrees of upholding us, when we are at a spirituall losse: for usually in what measure we (in the times of our peace and liberty) inordinately let loose our affections: in that measure are we cast down, or more deeply in discomfort: when our adulterous hearts cleave to outward things more than becomes chaste hearts, it makes the crosse more sharp and extreame: For, *That which is not enjoyed weth overmuch pleasure, is parted withall without overmuch grieve*. But for spirituall extremities, oftentimes the strongest feele them with quickest sense: for God herein respects not alwayes sinnes past, or more, or lesse measure of grace, as in *Jobs* case, who could without much distemper of soul, endure extremities of body and estate: but when God wrote bitter things against him, presently, he begins to sink, and but begins only, for when he was at worst, he stayes himselfe upon his Redeemer, to the glory of Gods Grace, and shame of the devill: Thus sometimes God makes his Children triumph, whom he sets as Champions in defiance of Satan. They in weaknesse think they shall utterly faile and perish, but their standing out in greatest conflicts shewes the contrary.

Of our support in spirituall losses.

Job 19. 25.

But to come to that which I intend chiefly to insist on, *The Lord shall deliver me from evill works*, &c. wherein we may see,

1. *The Author of his safety.*

2. *The deliverance is selfe.*

The Author is the Lord: no lesse than an Almighty power is necessary to deliver from any evill worke. For such is our inclinablenesse to joyn with temptations, such the malice and strength of our enemy: so many be the snares, and so cunningly spread in every thing we deale withall; that whatsoever delivereth us, must be above Satan and our own evil hearts more wise, more powerfull, more gracious to preserve us, than any adverse power can be to draw us unto evill works. In which case, well said *Moses*; when God in his wonted glorious presence refused to goe along with them, O saith *Moses* if thou goe not with us, carry us not hence.

Exod. 33. 15.

[Deliver] supposeth danger possible, or present, Beloved, Our lives are such, as stand in need of perpetuall deliverance. Our estate here is waving, The Church lives alwaies in tents, and hath never any hope of rest, untill the day of triumph, therefore, after forgiveness of sinnes, followes, *leade us not into temptation*, because though sinnes past be forgiven, yet we are in danger to be led into temptation, let none promise a truce to himselfe, which God promiseth not, if Satan and our corruptions joyne, we cannot be quiet, after sinnes of youth, we are in danger

of.

of finnes of ripenage; for though by grace in some sort sin be subdued, yet (untill it be wholly mortified) there will be some stirring up, untill that which is imperfect in us be abolished.

But I hasten to that which followes: *The Lord will deliver me from every evil worke.*

1 Sam. 17.37.
1 Cor. 1.10.

Whence (from the forme of the argument) observe, that *We ought to reason with God from former experience, to future*; yea it is a binding Argument with God: He loves to be sued, and pressed from former mercies, and suffers them to be bonds unto him: men will not do so, because their fountaine is soon drawne drie; but God is a spring that can never be emptyed: as he was able to helpe in former time, so he is also for the time to come: He is alwayes, I AM, JEHOVAH; alwayes where he was, his Arme is not shortened; what he hath done heretofore, he can doe now.

Viz.

SAM. 17.37

We should therefore register Gods favours, (which is the best use we can put our memories to) and make them so many arguments to build upon him for time to come, as *David: The Lord that delivered me (saith he) out of the paw of the Lion, and out of the paw of the Beare, will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine.* Oh were we but acquainted with this kind of reasoning with God, how undaunted would we be in all troubles? we should be as secure for the time to come, as for the time past, for all is one with God; We doe exceedingly wrong our owne soules, and weaken our faith, by not minding of Gods favours. How strong in faith might old men be, that have had many experiences of Gods love; if they would take this course? every former mercy should strengthen our faith for a new: as conquerors, whom every former victory incourageth to a new conquest: So old favours should help us to set upon God afresh.

But what is the limitation here? *from every evil worke*: which words we will first touch a little severally, and then consider more particularly of them.

Sometimes God speaks of duties as they issue from man; because indeed the will is mans from whence the duty comes; and therefore the Scripture speaks, as though the duty came from us, because the powers are ours from whence they spring. Sometimes the Scripture speaks of holy duties, as they issue from a higher power, from God: so here, (*The Lord will deliver me from every evil worke*) he means, that God would stir up his heart to care to avoid evil works. We are agents and patients in all we doe: we are agents, because the powers are ours; we are patients, because the Lord doth all. Now it is the language of the holy Ghost for the most part, when he speaks of good duties, to goe to the fountaine; especially when faith is to be strengthened.

Quest.

Ans.

But how doth God deliver?
By keeping us from occasions; or by ministering strength, if occasions be offered; by giving occasions of good, and by giving a heart to entertaine those occasions. He delivers us from evil works, by planting the graces of faith, and of feare in us, whereby we are preserved; and by peace which

which guards our soules from despaire, and tumultuous thoughts; yea he preserves us from evill works, through faith, unto his heavenly Kingdome. Phil. 4. 7.

In a word, *God preserves his children by making them better*: by weakning corruptions by his spirit, stirring up a clear sight and hatred of the same in them: and by withdrawing occasions which might prevaile over us, and by keeping us from betraying our selves unto them; by chaining up Satan, untill our strength be such as may incounter him; a great mercy it is, though little thought on, that God letteth not loose Satan upon us every moment; how should this stir us up with *David* to thankfulness and dependance upon God.

He delivers also wicked men from dangers, (not out of any love to their persons, but) because he hath some base service for them to undertake, to exercise the patience of his Children, and vex others better than themselves, which is not fit for godly men to doe: They are onely Gods Rod, and their deliverance is no preservation, but a reservation to worse mischief; it is not a bettering deliverance.

But God delivers his, graciously, not onely from danger, but from those evill workes they are subject to fall into their danger; it is not ill, to suffer ill, but to do ill: For, doing ill makes God our enemy; suffering ill doth not: doing ill staines and defiles the soul, and blemisheth the Image of God in us, suffering ill doth none of this; doing ill hinders communion and acquaintance with God; suffering ill doth not: God is more immediately acquainted with the soule in suffering ill. Doing ill is the cause of all ills; suffering ill, comes from doing ill: the ill of sin, is the ill of ills, because it is evill it selfe, and the cause of all other evils whatsoever: *We may thank our ill in doing, for our ill in suffering*: And therefore the Apostle is well assured what he sayes, *The Lord will deliver me from every evill worke*: not from every inward infirmitie and weaknesse, but from every evill work that is scandalous and offensive to him.

It is an aggravation of ill when it is manifested: for then it either taints or grieves others. Indeed, so soone as the resolution of the soule hath passed it, when the will resolves on such a thing, it is done, both in good and evill, before God. But in regard of the world, and of the Church we live in, the bringing of the work upon the stage (as it were) is an aggravation of evill; because (besides the hurt which is done to evil men) good men are either hurt or vexed at it. Therefore the Apostle saith, *The Lord will deliver me from every evill worke*. This a Christian should especially labour for, that God in all things would keep him free from sinne. Yea this differenceth a Christian from another man; take a carnal man when he is like to fall into danger, he studies how to get out of suffering evill, not how to prevent doing evill; he plots, devises, and intangles himselfe in his own wit, and makes the matter worse by equivocation, and such like sinfull courses, as we might learne from the Papists, if we had not enough from our own breast. But *Pauls* care was to be delivered from evill works: For a man indeed is never overcome, (let him be never so vexed in the world by any) till his conscience be crackt. If his

Rom. 8. 37. his conscience and his cause stand upright, he prevails still, *In all these things we are more than Conquerours*, saith the Apostle. The meaning is, sufferings cannot quell our courage, they cannot stain our conscience, they do not hurt the cause, but it gets victory in despite of them : so that our courage is undaunted, and our conscience abides unstained : let it be our care therefore to take heed of evill workes. Looke into the world, and see what is the care of most men we converse with ; oh, if they can get such a place, if they can get such an estate ! I, but it cannot be had without sinfull abasement, without cracking of conscience, and unlawfull engagement : O say they, it is no matter, God will pardon all, I care not so I may have my wish ; this is the heart of many gracelesse persons that are not led with heavenly respects. But take a Christian, & he had rather beg, doe any thing in the world, than doe a thing unworthy his profession, unbecoming the Gospel, or that high calling wherunto he is called. *Shall such a man as I doe this ?* he will not, and therefore his care is to take heed of ill workes : for then he is sure to have God his friend, who hath riches and honour enough for him, because the earth is the Lords, and the fulnesse thereof : this is the care of a judicious well instructed Christian.

But marke the (*Extent*) from every evill work : Saint Pauls care is not for one, or two, but that God would keepe him from every evill worke.

Why so ?

Why S.

Paul sayes
from every
evill work.

Pl. 119. 128.

Because he that truly hates one sin, will hate all the kinds of it, both come from the same love of God : he that loves God as he should, will hate whatsoever God hates : and have respect to all Gods commandments, (as the Psalmist speaks.) Partiall obedience, is indeed no obedience at all : for he that obeys one, and not another, obeyes not simply because of the Commander to yeeld obedience unto him : but only to satisfie his own corrupt nature, picking and choosing what pleases himself, which belongs not to an inferiour, but to a superiour to doe : And therefore, such make themselves gods, in that they single out easie things that do not oppose their lusts, which are not against their reputation, &c. and therein perhaps they will supererogate, and doe more than they need, onely because they will have a compensation with God, that he should quit with them for other things ; I have done that, and therefore he must beare with me in this. Oh, but there is no compensation here ; a man is never so straitned, but he may escape without sin : there is no pretence will serve : but we must abstaine from every evill worke : Satan keeps many men in his snare by this, and so he hath them safe in one sin, he cares not : therefore he will suffer them to heare, reade, and pray, &c. holding them fast in one reigning sinne, wherein he will let them alone till the time of some great affliction, or death, and then he will roare upon them. Oh beloved, we cannot provide worse for our own souls, than to cherish a purpose of living in any one sin : for that is enough for the devil to hold his possession in us by, and at the houre of death to claime us for his owne. *If we regard any iniquity in our heart, the Lord will not heare our prayers.* I beseech you therefore let us labour to have cleare consciences,

Plal. 66. 118.

freeing

freeing our selves from a purpose to live in any sin; that in all our slips and failings we may say with an honest heart, My purpose was not to do this, but to refraine from wickednesse.

Again, he speaks of this for the time to come; the Lord will deliver me from evill: *A true Christian is as carefull to avoid sinne for the time to come as to be freed from the guilt of sinnes past.* Judas may desire to have hi conscience freed from former sinnes, but Judas cannot desire to be a good man for the time to come. Nothing argues a good conscience more than this. The most wicked wretch that breathes, may desire to have his conscience stilled, and yet never have any purpose or power to abstaine from sinne; but like a dog (after he hath disgorged himselfe) returne to his vomit again. True Repentance is a turning from former evils, to a contrary good. Our grief no further yeelds comfort of sound repentance, then it hath care attending for prevention of sinne; according to that which Christ said to the woman taken in adultery, *Goe, and sinne no more:* and as David prayes, *Purge me O Lord, and cleanse me;* (but withall) *establishe me with thy free spirit* for the time to come. As if he should say, Lord, I know it is not in man to order his owne wayes, I desire not the forgiveness of my sinnes, that thereby I might with more liberty offend thy Majesty; but with pardoning grace, I beg preventing grace; No false heart can move such a desire as this to God. A gracious heart that prayes aright, prayes as well that God would preserve him from future sinne, as forgive him his former sinnes. It is a ridiculous thing of the Papists, to make confession of a sinne which they meane to commit; as some late Traitors confessed such and such things which they were to act, and were straight absolved for it. So your cursed *Ducists* that will pray and repent, when they mean presently to fall one upon another. Is this repentance, when a man is inveigled with the sin he meanes to commit, and cannot overcome himself in the case of revenge? Doe these men think they repent? No certainly, repentance is of sinnes past, and the carriage of every true Christian is to avoid evill for the time to come.

Again, it is here a perpetuated Act; the Lord will deliver me still from every evil worke: whence you see that *In every evill worke we are tempted to, we need delivering grace, as to every good worke assisting grace.* Indeed our whole life (if we look upwards) is nothing but a deliverance but if we looke to our selves, it is nothing but danger and a warfare; & therefore we have need of a deliverance. How little a temptation turnes over a great man? as sometimes a little wind turnes over your mighty gallies. We see this in David and Solomon, and (if God leave us to our selves) even the strongest man in the world, how soon is he overturned? in the midst of sinfull occasions, how ready are we to joyne with them, and betray our own soules?

But from the whole, take it as it comes from God altogether, the truth is thus much, That a Christian, who is privy to his own soul, of good intentions, to abstain from all ill for the present, may presume that God will assist him against all ill works for the time to come. I say a Christian that hath his conscience

Q

telling

telling him, that he means to be better, and is not in league with any sin, may beleeve this for the time to come, that God will keepe him from evill workes. I speak this, because many who are yet sinners, think it in vaine to strive; for they shall never be better. What dost thou talk man? hast thou a mind to be better? God will meet thee one time or other: Is thy will at liberty? he that gives thee the will, will also give thee the deed: is not this the Promise, that God will deliver thee from every evil worke? and therefore away with all discouragements.

Object. O but *There are sonnes of Anak, mighty Giants, that molest me; my sins are as so many Giants to stop my proceeding, I shall never be better.* Say not

Sol. so; nay, rather thou wilt not be better: thou art in league with some secret sinne, thy heart riseth against those that reprove thee of it, thine own conscience tells thee that thy heart is naught: for if thou wouldst fet thy selfe to obey God in truth, assuredly he would deliver thy soule. And therefore the Apostle to prevent such doubts, speaks of deliverance from evill workes, as coming from God.

Object. But some may object, *we sin every day; and if we say we have no sinne, we deceive our selves, and the truth is not in us.*

1 John 1. 8.

Ans.

You must not understand this phrase Legally in the vigor of it; as that God will deliver us from every ill thought, or rising in the heart, or from every outward slip and falling, &c. But by every evil worke, the Apostle meanes, every reproachfull sinne that breaks the peace of our conscience, that swallows up a mans salvation; from such kind of finnes that bring a stain and discredit unto a mans profession, that wound his soul, and may discourage others, the Lord will deliver his; he will keep them from greater finnes, altogether, and from being in league with lesser. You know in falls there are severall degrees, there is a slip, a falling, and a falling on all foure, (as we say) a flat falling: Now God will deliver his children from falling so foulely.

2
How God delivers from ill workes, by not delivering.

Nay, Sometimes he will deliver them from evill workes, by not delivering them from evill workes: He will deliver from great ill workes, by letting them alone in lesser ill workes. God delivers from evill divers wayes; he delivers from falling into ill, and he delivers out of ill when we are fallen; he delivers from ill likewise by supporting us: nay, which is more, he delivers from ill workes by ill workes.

How is that?

Quest.

Sol.

How doe Physitians deliver from an Apoplexie? from a Lethargie? Is it not by casting the sick person into an Ague, to awaken that dul sicknesse? so God to cure the conscience of a man, when he sees him in danger of security by those soule-killing finnes, *Pride, Covetousnesse, Loosenesse, Hypocrisie*, and the like, suffers him sometimes to fall into lesse offences, to awake his conscience, that being rouzed up he may fly to Gods mercy in Christ: so infinite is Gods care this way, that he will deliver either from ill workes, or from the roill of ill workes; or if he deliver not from ill workes, yet he will deliver us from worse workes by those ill workes. *Austin* saith, I dare presume to say, it is profitable for some men to fall: if a man be of a proud peremptory disposition, or of a bloc-

kish,

kith, dull, and secure nature; it is good he should be acquainted what sin he carryes in his breast, where his corruptions are, &c. that so he may know himselfe and his danger the better.

I beseech you make use of this, to help your faith and thankfulness; when we are delivered from evill works, it is God that doth it: The consideration whereof me thinks should strengthen our faith against Satan, and all his fiery darts, and incourage us to set confidently upon any corruption, that we are moved to by others, or our owne naturall inclination; It is Gods enemy, and it is my enemy: it is opposite to Gods will, and it is an enemy to my comfort; God will take my part against that which is opposite to him; he hath promised me to assist me against every evil worke by his holy Spirit. A Christian is a King, and he hath the triumphing Spirit of Christ in him, which will prevaile over all sin in time.

v/s.

Revel. 1. 6.

But some poor soul may object; Alas, I have been assaulted by such a corruption a long time, in a grievous manner, and am not yet delivered from it.

Object.

God doth by little and little purge out corruption, as every stroke helps the fall of the oak, the first stroke helps forward: so every opposing of corruption (never so little) helps to root it out, and it is weakened by little and little, till death accomplish more mortification.

Answ.

But to proceed, God doth not onely deliver from evill works, but preserves us to his heavenly Kingdome. We must take [preserve] here in its full bredth, he preserves us whilst he hath any work for us to do in this life; and when he will have us live no longer: he will preserve us to heaven: howsoever by death he takes us away, yet even then the Lord still preserves us.

He will preserve us in our outward estate, by himselfe, and by underpreservers, for there be many such under God: as *Angels* that are his ministering spirits, and *Magistrates* who are the shields of the earth, they may preserve under God; and likewise *Ministers* that are the Chariots and horsemen of Israel; and good lawes, &c. but God is the first turner of the Wheele, we must see him in all other preservers whatsoever. And therefore the Apostle in the language of the holy Ghost, and of *Canaan*, saith here, *The Lord will preserve me*. And rather than a man shall miscarry, when God hath any thing for him to doe, God will work a miracle. The three men could not be burn'd in the fire, God so suspended the force thereof: *Daniel* could not be devoured of the greedy Lions, &c. rather than Gods purpose shall fail, that a man should perish before the time that God hath allotted him, the Lions shall not devoure, and the fire shall not burn; God hath measured our glasse & time even to a moment, and as our Saviour Christ (out of knowledge of this heavenly truth) saith, *My time is not yet come*: so let us know that till our houre comes, all the Devils in hell cannot hurt one haire of our head: And this is a wondrous ground of confidence, that we should cary our selves above all threatnings, and above all fears whatsoever. *Thou canst do nothing except it were given thee*, saith Christ to bragging Pilate, who boasted of

Under preservers of the Saints.

Psal. 47. 9.
2 Kings 2. 12.Dan. 3. 25.
6. 12.

John 19. 10.

his power : alas, what can all the enemies of Gods people doe, except God permit them?

If a King or a great man should say to an inferiour, Goe on, I will stand by thee and preserve thee, thou shalt take no harme : what an encouragement were this? Oh but when God shall say to a Christian, walk humbly before me, keepe close to my word, be stedfast in the wayes of holinesse, fear not man, you are under my protection and safeguard, this is a farre greater encouragement to a beleeving soule.

But put case we cannot be preserved from death, (for so it was here with the Apostle, he dyed a bloody death) Why let us observe his blessed carriage in all this, and doe likewise : I regard not that, saith he, doe your worst, God will preserve me still. So it should be the bent of a Christians soule to come to God with this limitation, in his faith and in his prayer : Lord if thou wilt not deliver me from suffering ill, preserve me from doing ill : If thou wilt not preserve me from death, preserve me from sinfull works. This we may build on, that either God will preserve us in life, or if we die, he wil preserve us in death to his heavenly Kingdome.

Act 12. 7.

And sometimes God preserves by not preserving from death : for indeed, death keeps a man from all danger whatsoever, he is out of all gunshot when he is once dead : death is a deliverance and a preservation of it self, it sends a man to heaven strait, and therefore the Apostle knew what he said, *The Lord will preserve me to his heavenly kingdome* : That is, he will preserve me till I be possesse of heaven : he will goe along with me in all the passages of my life : he will carry me through all, and bring me thither at last. As the Angell that struck off Peters bolts, shined in the prison, and carryed him out into the City : So God by his Spirit, shines into our souls and carries us through all the passages of this life, never leaving us till he have brought us to his heavenly Kingdome.

And not to open unto you things that are beyond my conceit, much more my expression, what a state this heavenly Kingdome is, unto which S. Paul hoped to be preserved, observe briefly thus much :

- 1 It is a Kingdome, of all conditions the freest.
- 2 The most glorious.
- 3 The most abundant in all supplies.
- 4 It is a heavenly Kingdome.
- 5 It is an everlasting Kingdome.

The excellency of the heavenly Kingdome.

Things the nearer the Heavens they are, the purer they are : 1 Heaven is a most holy Kingdome, no uncleannesse can enter there, 2 It is a large Kingdome, and 3 an everlasting Kingdome. Other mens Kingdomes determine with their persons ; perhaps they may live to see the glory in the world, as Nero did (the King that Paul was under now, when he wrote this Epistle) who came to a base end : But this Kingdome can never be shaken : Gods preservation shall end in eternall glory.

Here

Here is a speciall ground to Gods Children of perseverance in well-doing: what, doth God undertake, even from himselfe to deliver us from evill works, which might indanger our salvation, and to preserve us untill he have put us into heaven? where is the popish doctrine of falling away then? *Ob but I may sinne, and so fall away.* I, but God will deliver us from evill workes, he takes away that objection; *He that keeps Heaven for us, keeps us for heaven,* till he have put us into possession of it; *We are kept* (we are guarded, as the word is) *by the power of God to salvation.* Salvation is kept for us, and we for that; If we indanger heaven any way, it is by ill workes, and God keeps us from them: what a most comfortable doctrine is this?

Use 1.

Object.
Sol.

1 Pet. 1. 5.

But to adde a second, against that foolish, vaine, and proud point of *Popish Merit*; we see what a strain they are in: first, before conversion, they will have *Merit of congruities*, that it befits the goodnesse of God, when we doe what we can, that we should have grace. 2 When we are in the state of grace, they will have *Merit of condignity*; but how can that be, when as free grace runnes along in all? God preserves us from evill workes, and preserves us to his heavenly Kingdome of his meere love and mercy; where then is the merit of man? Indeed, we do good when we doe good, but God inables us: we speake to the praise of God, but he opens our mouth: we beleeve, but God draws our heart to it: as *Austin* sayes, we move, but God moves us.

Use 2.

I beseech you observe further here, *How compleat Gods favours are to his: he deales like a God: that is, fully, and eternally with his children.* If he deliver, it is from the greatest evill; if he preserve, it is to the greatest good; Who would not serve such a waster? O the basenesse of the vile heart of man, that is a slave to inferiour things, & afraid to displease men, never considering what a blessed condition it is, to be under the government of a gracious God, that will keepe us from ill (if it befor our good) for ever; Outwardly from evill workes, inwardly from the terrors of an ill conscience; that will preserve us here in this world, and give us heaven when we have done. I beseech you let this compleat and full dealing of God, quicken us to a holy courage & constancy in his service.

Use 3.

And see here a point of heavenly wisdom: to look (when we are in any danger) with the Apostle to the heavenly kingdome. When we are sick, look not at death; *Paul* cared not for that, but sayes he, *The Lord will preserve me to his Kingdom.* He looked to the bank of the shore: as a man that goes through a river, hath his eye still on the shore; so the Apostle had his eye fixed upon heaven still. I beseech you therefore in all dangers and distresses whatsoever (if you would keepe your soules without discouragements, as you should) be much in heaven in your thoughts, minding the things above, and conversing with God in your spirits. Look to the Crown that is held out to us: Let our minds be in heaven before our soules. It is a wondrous help to our weaknesse in the time of trouble, not to think, I am full of pain, I must be turned into the grave, and rot, and what shall become of me then? &c. away with this carnall reasoning, it much weakens faith, and damps the hearts of Christians.

Use 4.

- U/16. Again, *How doth this arme the soule with invincible courage in any trouble?* God may call me to trouble, but he will preserve me in it, that I shall not stain my Conscience; What a ground of Patience is this? *Patience* is too meane a word: what a ground of joy and triumphing is it? *We rejoyce under the hope of glory*, Rom. 8. 2. A Christian should triumph in soule over all evils whatsoever, and be (as the Apostle saith) *more than a Conquerour*, considering that God will be present with him all his life long, and after that bring him to an everlasting Kingdome: what an encouragement is this? Heaven is holy, and shall we not fit our selves for that blessed estate? There is much holinesse required for heaven: the sinfull, wicked, malicious, poysonfull world, dayes reproaches upon holinesse; but *without it no man shall see God*. Doth that man believe he shall obtaine a heavenly Kingdome, who never fits himselfe with holinesse for it? Oh no, *Faith and hope have this efficacie (in the breast) whereforever they are, to frame the heart to the thing believed*. If I beleve a Kingdome to be where righteousness and holinesse dwelleth, this beleife forceth me to carry my selfe answerable to the state there. And therefore (saith the Apostle) *our conversation is in heaven, from whence we looke for the Saviour, &c.* because he was assured of heaven, therefore he conversed as a Citizen of heaven before he came there. He praised God, kept himselfe undefiled of the world, and conversed with the best people; every way he carryed himselfe (as much as earth would suffer him) as they doe in heaven. Certainly, *He that hath the hope of a heavenly Kingdome, is pure as Christ is pure*: He endeavours and sines to be holy as God is holy, who hath called him: Faith is of efficacy to conforme a Christians carriage to the likenesse of him whom he beleives to be so excellent. And therefore they are seducels, and have no saving faith; profane persons, who live in sinnes that stain their consciences, and blemish their conversation: not believing that there is a heaven. *Desire not your selves, neither Whoremongers, nor Adulterers, nor Extortioners, &c.* shall inherit the Kingdome of God. Doe men who live in these sins (without remorse) thinke to come to heaven? as though they should come out of the puddle to heaven? no, no, *away you workers of iniquity, I know you not*, saith Christ. Let no man cherish presumptions of a heavenly Kingdome, except he abstaine from all sinnes against conscience: The Apostle when he would urge to holinesse of life, uses this argument: *If you be risen with Christ, seek those things that are above, where Christ is at the right hand of the Father*.

Well, let us off (I beseech you) present unto our soules the blessed condition to come, which will be effectual to quicken and stir us up to every good duty, and comfort us in all conditions whatsoever. What, will a man care for crosses, and losses, and disgraces in the world, that thinks of a heavenly Kingdome? What, will a man care for ill usage in his pilgrimage, when he knowes he is a King at home? We are all strangers upon earth, now in the time of our absence from God: what if we suffer indignities considering that we have a better estate to come, when we shall be some body? What if we passe unknown in the world? It is safe

safe that we should doe so: God will preserve us to his heavenly kingdome, and all that we suffer & endure here, is but a fitting for that place. *David* was a King anointed many yeares ere he was actually possessed of his Kingdom; but all that time between his anointing and his investing into the Kingdome, it was a preparing of him; by humilitie, that he might know himselfe; and learne fitnessse to govern aright: So we are anointed King as soone as we beleve: for when we beleve in Christ, who is a King, Priest, and Prophet, we communicat with his offices: we have the same blessed anointing powred on our head, and runs downe about us. But we must be humbled by crosses, and fitted for it, we must be drawne more out of the world, and be heavenly minded first.

Psal. 133. 2.

Would you know some rules of discerning whether heaven belong to you or not? In briebe doe but remember the qualification of them that must reign: those that labour daily to purge themselves of all pride and selfe confidence: that see no excellencie in the creature, in comparison of heaven: that see a vanity in all outward things, which makes them humble in the midst of all their bravery: those that see themselves empty of all, without Gods favour: *The poore in spirit, &c. theirs (saith Christ) is the Kingdom of heaven.*

Rules to discern what our interest in heaven is.

1 *Faith makes us Kings*, because thereby we marry the King of Heaven: the Church is the Queen of Heaven, and Christ is the King of Heaven. Where this grace is in truth, happinesse belongs to that soule.

2 *Those that are Kings have a royall spirit*; the hopes of a young Prince puts into him a great deal of spirit, otherwise perhaps above his disposition. So all that are Kings have a royall spirit in some measure, which raiseth them above all earthly things, and maketh them see all other things to be nothing in comparison of Christ; to be but drosse and dung, as holy *S. Paul* saith. Those therefore that are slaves to their base lusts, to riches, honour, pleasure, &c. know not what belongs to this heavenly Kingdome. What doe men think to reigne in heaven, when they cannot reigne over their own base corruptions? We see *David* prayes to God for an enlarged spirit, that he might be capable of the best things; and certainly those that have this knowledge, are of a spirit above the world, more excellent than their neighbors, as the Wiseman saith. You cannot shake them with offers of preferment, or with feares: they will not venture their hope of eternity for this or that base earthly thing, they are of a more royall spirit than so.

Philip. 3. 8.

Psal. 51. 10.

I beseech you therefore let us discern of our spirits, what they are; whether God hath stablished us with a free spirit or not: the kindome of Heaven is begun upon earth, the doore whereby we must enter in, is here. Those graces must be begun here which must fit us for happinesse hereafter, as the stones of the Temple, were first hewn, and then laid upon the Temple, so we must be hewn and fashioned here, ere we can come thither: those that are not fitted and squared now, must never think to be used of God as living stones of his Temple then. A word now of Amale use of all, and so I conclude:

1 Kings 6.

To whom be glory for ever and ever.

When

When he had mentioned the *heavenly Kingdome*, and set himselfe by faith (as it were) in possession of it; he presently beginnes the employment of heaven; *to praise and glorifie God*: even whilst he was on earth. For faith stirs us up to doe that which we shall doe when we obtaine the thing beleaved: it is called the evidence of things not seene; and makes them (as it were) present to the soule. Because when we are in heaven (indeed) we shall doe nothing else but praise God. Faith apprehends it, as if he were now there (for all is sure to faith, God having said it, who will doe it) and sets the soul upon that employment here, which it shall have eternally with God hereafter.

It is therefore Christian wisdom, to fixe our soules on good meditations to have them wedded to good thoughts, to have those *praeclaras cogitationes*, befitting Christians, that may lead us comfortably in our way to heaven: Let a man thinke of Gods deliverances past; and that will strengthen his faith for the *future deliverances*: Let him think of future deliverances, and that will lead him to a *kingdome*, to *praise God*: and this praising of God will stretch his soule, *for ever and for ever*: as if there were no time sufficient to glorifie God, that is so excellent and glorious. What a blessed condition is this, to have Gods spirit warming our souls, and perfuming our spirits with holy ejaculations, continually putting us upon the employment of heaven, till at length it hath safely brought us thither?

Here then is the use of all uses: What is the former use which *Paul* makes of the experience of Gods deliverance? The Lord hath delivered me; and therefore he will deliver me: but what use doth he make of this, that God will deliver him? *To glorifie God*: here is the end of all ends, *to praise God*; happy we when Gods end and our end meete together. He hath made all for his own glory, and when we with a single eye can aim at that too, what a sweet harmony is there?

To direct us in this duty in praising God, let us with *Paul* (for I go no further than the text leads me) seriously meditate on Gods mercies, both past and to come; nothing moves thankfulness more than this. A Christian when he looks backward hath comfort; and when he looks forward, he sees comfort still: for preservation, and Kingdomes, and Crownes abide for him. If a man would praise God therefore, let him consider how graciously God hath dealt with him: He hath delivered me already by Jesus Christ, from sinne and eternall wrath; and he will deliver me from every evil work to come, that may indanger my salvation. Think of these things, and see whether your hearts can be cold and dead or no; see if your spirits can be streightned. Certainly both heart and mouth will be full, thou canst not but say in the apprehension of Gods mercies: *To him be glory for ever*.

Consider the kinds of favours thou receivest, they are either positive or privative: spirituall or temporall. Positive, the Lord will preserve me: privative, the Lord will deliver me from every evil worke. Temporall the Lord in this life will keep me; spirituall, he will deliver me from the power of sinne: Eternall, He will preserve me to his *heavenly Kingdome*.

and W

Think

Think forward or backward : outward or inward : spirituall or temporall : where ever you looke, tell me if you can doe otherwise than break out with the holy Apostle, in the praises of so good a God.

And 3 *Thinke of the greatnesse of all these : the greatnesse of the deliverance from sinne, and damnation.* The Apostle to make himself the more thankfull, saith, he was delivered out of the mouth of the Lion : he had large apprehensions of Gods goodnesse: So should we, beloved, consider the greatnesse of the misery we are in by nature, being slaves of Satan, in danger to slip into Hell every moment; and when God hath secured us from this, think of the greatnesse of the benefit, *a heavenly Kingdome.* When we think not onely of the benefits, but of the greatnesse of them it is a wondrous encouragement to be thankfull. Labour then to have a, due and high esteem of every mercy. God hath brought us out of darkness into marvellous light, saith the Apostle; *Great is the mysterie of godlinesse, and the unsearchable riches of his grace:* he had not words big enough to expresse Gods goodnesse: *Oh the height, and bredth, and depth, and length of his love.* When we consider these dimensions, our thankfulness must be answerable.

Againe, if you would be thankfull, *Labour to have humble spirits, to see God in all things,* and then you will sacrifice to him alone; not to thy parts, and graces, friends, abilities, &c. the meeke are fit to pray to God, *Seeke the Lord yee meeke of the earth;* and an humbled meeke soule is the fittest to praise God of any other; *He that knowes he is worthy of nothing, will blesse God for any thing:* he that knowes he hath nothing in himselfe will be thankfull for the least measure of grace; an humble soule is a thankfull soule. We see it was *Pauls* disposition here: he gives all to God, which makes him so break out in praising his name.

Againe if we would be thankfull (as *Paul* here) and begin Heaven upon Earth; *Labour to be assured of salvation,* and perseverance in thy Christian course. The Papists that speake against *Assurance* and *perseverance*, kill prayer and praising of God. Shall a man praise God for that which he doubts of? I cannot tell whether God will damn me or not, perhaps I am but fitted as a sheepe to the slaughter, &c. how shall a man praise God for any blessing he enjoyes, when these thoughts are still with him? how shall a man praise God for salvation, when perhaps he shall not come to it? how shall a man praise God for that which perhaps he may fall from, before he die? when perhaps he is Gods to day, and may be the Devils to morrow? How can there be a hearty thanks, said when a man can say, *The Lord will deliver me from every evil work,* that by mine own weaknesse, and Satans malice, I may occasionally fall into; betwixt this and Heaven? Therefore if we would praise God as we should, let us work our hearts to labour after assurance of Gods favour, let us redeem our precious time, and every day for some time apart, strengthen our evidences for heaven, which will let us in a continuall frame to every good worke.

Thus we see out of *Pauls* example, how we should be disposed here, to be in heaven before our time. For, *undoubtedly he who praiseth God is far*
much

much in Heaven, as he is given to thankfulness; for he is in that employment now, which shall be there altogether. But how long doth he desire that God should have glory? For ever and ever.

Obser.

A Christian should have the extent of his desires of Gods glory, carried to eternity. Upon what ground? Because God intends him glory for ever and ever: a Christian that is assured of his salvation, is assured that God will eternally glorifie him: He knowes that Christ is King for ever: He knowes that Christ is a Priest for ever: He knows that the state and condition he is kept for, is everlasting: *It is an inheritance immortall and undefiled, that fadeth not away*: and therefore he saith, Hath God eternall thoughts of my good? and is Christ an eternall head? an eternall King to rule me both in life and death? Surely I will extend my desires of his glory, as farre as he extends his purpose to doe me good. Now his purpose to doe me good is for eternity, and my desire that he may have glory, shall be for eternity, world without end. This is the disposition of a gracious soule, not that God may be honoured by him alone, but of all: To whom be praise (not by me) but by all: I am not sufficient enough to praise him: *To him be praises in the Churches throughout all ages for ever*: David had not largeness enough in himselfe to blesse God; and therefore he stirs up his spirits, and all within him to praise his holy name, as if all were too little to set out the glory of Gods infinite goodness, mercy, wisdom, and power; those gracious attributes, that shew themselves glorious in bringing men to salvation, and in governing the Church.

1 Pet. 1:4.

Psal. 103.

Use.

Learne this duty therefore, *If we will make good to our owne soules, that we are in the state of grace, we must plot for eternity, and indeavour to lay a ground and foundation, that the Church may flourish for eternity*. No man can warrant himselfe to be a good Christian, but he that labours to have the Church and Common-wealth flourish: to have a happy Kingdome, happy government, and happy lawes: not only to have the Church in his own family, but that the Church may flourish in those that stand up when we are gone the way of all flesh; and therefore to declare the minde of God, and his favours to us, and our children, that they may strengthen their experience, with their fathers experience, and say to God, That art the God of my Fathers, therefore be my God; those that are called to places of dignity, should consider that it is required at their hands to labour, that there should be means to continue Religion, even to the worlds end (if it may be) and to stop all the breaches in this kinde. And if it were possible it were to be wished that there were set up some lights in all the dark corners of this Kingdom, that might shine to those people that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death.

2

One way is, *To have a care that there be no breaches made upon the sound doctrine that is left unto us, and hath been sealed up by the blood of so many Martyrs*. We had it dearly, is hath been taught by our forefathers, and sealed with their blood; and shall we betray it? No, let us labour to deliver it to our posterity, from hand to hand, to the coming of Christ; and then we shall in effect (and not in word onely) doe that which Paul saith here, labour to glorifie God for ever and ever, both in

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The Church, and in heaven. Surely those that will glorifie God in heaven, he will have them so disposed, to glorifie him on earth.

It is a dangerous thing when persons are naught; we see what comes of it (especially if they be great;) It is said of *Manasseh* when God had forgiven him his sinne, yet afterwards God plagued the Kingdome for the finnes that *Manasseh* committed: how can this be? because he by his sinne (though he repented himself, yet) set the Kingdome in an evill frame. And no question but he had naughty principles: and among people that are given to licentiousnesse, if there be any thing in great men, it will goe to posterity after them. So that when Governors are naught, they are not onely a poyson to the Church and State, while they live, but the mischief of it is, after and after still. And so it is in the best things if the Governour be good, he layes a foundation of good for the Kingdome in time to come, as well as for his own time.

How will it shame a man when he shall think, I doe these things now, but what will posterity think of me? what will be the remembrance of it when I am gone? then my name will stink. The wicked Emperour *Nero* was of this resolution when he should die: *Let Heaven and Earth mingle together, saith he, when I am gone*: He knew himselfe to be so naught, and that he should be so evill spoken of, that he wished there were no posterity, but that the world might end with him. So it is the wishes of those that are wretches themselves, and that lay a foundation of wretched times after; they wish that Heaven and earth may mingle, that no man might censure them when they are gone. What a shamefull condition is it for men to gratifie a number of unruly lusts, and give such sway to them, as to doe ill while they live, and to lay a foundation of misery for after times.

On the contrary, what a good thing is it (like *Josias* and *Nehemiah*) to be full of goodnesse while we live, and to lay a foundation of happinesse and prosperity to the Church and State when we are gone? What a happy thing is it when a man is gone, to say, such a man did such a thing? he stood stoutly for the Church, for Religion, he was a publique man; he forgot his own private good, for the publique; he deserved well of the times wherein he lived. What a blessed commendation is this (next to Heaven) to have a blessed report on earth? and to carry such a conscience, as will comfort a man that he hath carryed himselfe well, and abounded in well-doing.

I beseech you let us think of this, *For ever and ever*: it is not enough that we be good in our times that are circumscribed to us; but as God hath given us immortall soules, and preserves us to immortall glory, &c a crown of immortality: so let our thoughts and desires be immortall, that God may be glorified in the Church, *world without end*. Oh what a sweet comfort will it be when we are on our death-bed, to thinke what we have done in our life times? then all our good actions will come and meet together, to comfort and refresh our soules.

The better to encourage us to glorifie God while we are here, and to lay a foundation to eternize his glorie for the time to come; Consider, 1. Gods
gracions

Incor-
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glor-
tifie God.

1 Sam. 2. 30: *gracious Promise:* Those that honour me I will honour. If we had enlarged hearts to honour God, God would honour us; he hath passed his word for it. If a King should say so, O how would we be set on fire? how much more when the King of Kings saith it?

2 Consider, that *we honour our selves when we honour God*; nay, the more we honour God, the more we are bound to God; for it is from him that we honour him: the sacrifice comes from him, as well as the matter for which we sacrifice. He found a Ramme for Abraham to sacrifice: he gives the heart to be thankfull: the more we are thankfull, the more we shall be thankfull, and the more we ought to be thankfull for our thankfulness.

3 *The more we praise God, the more we should praise him*; for it is the gift of God: when God sees we honour him, and frame our selves that we may be such as may honour him, by emptying and disabling our selves to be sufficient to doe him any service, he will bestow more upon us; as men cast seed upon seed where there is fruitful ground, but they will sow nothing upon a barren heath: So the more we set our selves to doe good in our places, the more we shall have advantage thereunto; and the more we doe good, the more we shall doe good. When God sees we improve our talents so well that he trusts us withall, he will trust us with more.

4 Again, consider, *Our glorifying and praising God, causeth others to doe so*; which is the main end wherefore we live in this world; It is the imployment of heaven, and we are so much in heaven, as we are about this worke: and when God gives us hearts to glorifie him here, it is a good pledge that he will afterward glorifie us in heaven. Who would lose the comfort of all this, to be barren, and yeeld to his base unbeleev- ing dead heart? to save a little here? to sleep in a whole skin? and adventure upon no good action? Who would not rather take a course that hath such large encouragements attending it both in life and death? I beseech you think of these things. Christ ere long will come to be glorified in all those that beleeve: He will come to be glorified in his Saints. Our glory tends to his glory; shall we not glorifie him all we can here, by setting forth his truth, by countenancing his Children and Servants, by doing good, and deserving well of ingratefull times we live in? Let men be as thankfull as they will, we look not to them, but to the honour of God the credit of Religion, the maintenance of the truth, &c. Let men be as they will be, base, and wicked, enemies to grace and goodness; we doe it not to them, but to God. Consider this, Will Christ come from heaven ere long to be glorified in us; and shall not we labour to glorifie him while we are here? He will never come to be glorified in any hereafter, but those that glorifie him now. As we looke therefore that he should be glorified in us, and by us, let us glorifie him now: for so he condescends to vouchsafe to be glorified in us and by us, that he may also glorifie us.

Quest. Saint Paul saith, *The Wife is the glory of the Husband*: what meanes he by this? That is, she reflects the graces of a good Husband; if hee be good, she is good, she reflects his excellencies: So let every Christian soul

oule that is married to Christ, be the glory of Christ, reflect his excellencies ; be holy as he is holy ; fruitfull, as he was, in doing good ; meek and humble as he was, every way be his glory: and then, undoubtedly, when he comes to judge us, he will come to be glorified in us, having been before glorified by us. 1 Pet. 1. 15.

Beloved, these and such considerations should set us on work how to doe Christ all the honour we can : as *David* saith, is there any of *Jona-* 1. Sam. 9. 12.
thans posterity alive, that I may doe good unto them for his sake? so considering, we shall be so glorified by Christ, and that, he will doe so much for us in another world ; We should enquire, Is there any of Christs posterity here, any of his Children in this world, that I may doe good unto them? Is there any way wherein I may shew my thankfulness, and I will doe it? Let us consider that we shall be for and ever glorified ; the expression of it is beyond conceit, we shall never know it till we have it. Let this (I beseech you) stirre us up to study how we may be thankfull to God, set forth his glory, and deserve well of the Church and times wherein we live. God hath Children, and a cause in the world, which he dearely loves, let us owne the same, and stand for it to the uttermost of our power, maugre all the spite and opposition of Satan and his wicked instruments.

The Lord in mercy settle these truths upon our hearts: and encourage us in his most holy way.

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THE DANGER OF BACK-SLIDING.

SERM. X,

1 TIM. 4. 10.

For Demas hath forsaken me, and imbraced this present world.



Blessed Saint Paul, being now an old man, and ready to sacrifice his dearest blood, for the sealing of that truth, which he had carefully taught; sets down in this Chapter, what divers entertainment he found both from God and Man in the preaching of the Gospel. As for men, he found they dealt most unfaithfully with him, when he stood most in need of comfort from them. *Demas* (a man of great note) in the end forsook him: *Alexander the Copper-smith* (thus it pleaseth God to try his dearest ones with base oppositions of worthlesse persons) did him most mischief: *Weaker Christians* forsook him; &c. But marke the wisdom of Gods Spirit in the blessed Apostle, in regard of his different carriage towards these persons. *Demas*, because his fault was greater, by reason of the eminency of his Profession, him he brands to all posterity, for looking back to *Sodom*, & to the world, after he had put his hand to the Plough: *Alexanders* opposing, because it sprung from extremity of malice to-

wards the profession of godlinesse, him he curseth: *The Lord reward him according to his workes.* Weaker Christians who failed him, from want of some measure of spirit and courage, retaining stil a hidden love to the cause of Christ; their names he conceales, with prayer, that God would not lay their sinne to their charge. But whilst *Paul* lived in this cold comfort on *Earth*, see what large encouragement had he from Heaven? Though all forsooke me, yet (sayes he) *God did not forsake me, but stood by me, and I was delivered out of the mouth of the Lion.*

Ver. 17.

Obser.

In the words we have 1. this remarkable observation, *That it is the lot of Gods dearest Children, to be oftentimes forsaken of those that have been most neere unto them.* Thus it was with Christ himselfe, his Disciples fled and left him. *David* complaineth that his friends forsooke him; and *Elias* mourneth because he was left alone, and they sought his life also.

Reas. 1.

And God suffers his dearest Children to be thus forsaken, that they may be made conformable to their head Christ Jesus, who was left alone of his beloved Disciples, and had none to comfort him.

Reas. 2.

Againe, God suffers this to draw them to the fountaine, that they might flie to Christ, in whom all true comfort lies, and see whether bee is not better than ten Sonnes, as *Eli* spake to *Hannah*. The Lord oft imbitters other comforts to men, that Christ may be sweete to them. Our hearts naturally hang loose from God, and are soone ready to joyn with the creature. Therefore we should soare much aloft in our Meditations, and see the excellencies of Christ, and adhere to him. This will soone take off the soule from resting upon other props. When *David* began to say *My hill is strong*, then presently *his soule was troubled*. Out of God there is nothing fit for the soule to stay it selfe upon, for all outward things are beneath the worth of the soule, and draw it lower than it selfe. Earthly things (such as are riches, honours, friends, &c.) are not given us for staves to rest upon, but for comforts in our way to Heaven. What ever comfort is in the creature, the soule will spend quickly, and look still for more; whereas the comfort that wee have in God, is undefiled, and fadeth not away.

God hath therefore planted the grace of faith in us, that our soules thereby might be carried to himselfe, and not rely upon vaine things, which onely are so farre good, as we doe not trust in them. Who would trust to that for comfort, which by very trusting proves uncomfortable to him? If we trust it friends, or estate, more than God, we make them Idols.

There is still left in mans nature a desire of pleasure, profit, and what ever the creature presents as good; but the desire of gracious comforts, and heavenly delights is altogether lost: the soul being wholly infected with a contrary taste. Man hath a nature capable of excellency, and desirous of it; and the Spirit of God in, and by the Word, discovers where true excellency is to be had; but corrupt nature leaving God seeketh it elsewhere, in carnall friendship, and the like; and so croseth its owne desires, till the Spirit of God discovers where these things are to be had, and so nature is brought to its right frame againe, by turning the

the stream into its right current. Grace and sinfull nature have the same generall object of comfort, onely *sinfull nature* seekes it in *broken Cisternes*, and grace in the *Fountainne*. The beginning of our true happines, is from the discovery of true and false objects; so as the soule may clearly see what is best and safest, and then stedfastly rely upon it: For the soule is, as that which it relies upon, if on vanity, it selfe becomes vain; If upon God and Christ, it becomes a spirituall and heavenly soule. It is no small priviledg then which the Lord vouchsafeth some, by knocking of their fingers, and crossing their greedy appetites after earthly comforts, that he may refresh them with pleasures of a higher nature. Alas, what is the delight that we have in friends, or children, and the like, to the joy of Gods presence, and the pleasures at his right hand for evermore?

But to bring the text a little closer to our selves, the thing that I would have you chiefly to observe, is this, *That those that have gone far in Religion, may yet notwithstanding fall away, and become Apostates.* Obstr?

The reason is, 1. because they rest on their owne strength, and there is no support in man to uphold himselfe. Without Christ we can doe nothing. We see how weake the Apostles themselves were, till they were indued with strength from aboye. Peter was blasted with the speech of a Damselfell. Therefore in all our incounters and feare of falling, we should lift up our hearts to Christ, who hath Spirit enough for us, all; and say with good *Jehoshaphat*, *Lord we know not what to do, but our eyes are towards thee.* The battell we fight is thine, and the strength whereby we fight must be thine. If thou goest not out with us, we are sure to be foyled. Satan knows that nothing can prevail against Christ, or those that rely upon his power, therefore his study is, how to keep us in our selves, and in the creature: but we must carry this alwaies in our mindes, that that which is begun in self-confidence will end in shame. Reas. 11

2 Because Satan, that grand *Apostate* is fallen from the truth himselfe, and he labours to draw others to fall back with him; for being a cursed spirit, cast and tumbled downe himselfe from heaven, where hee is never to come again, he is full of malice, and labours all that he can to ruine and destroy others, that they may be in the same cursed condition with himselfe. By his envie and subtlety we were driven out of *Paradise* at the first, and ever since he envies us the *Paradise* of a good conscience. He cannot indure that a creature of meaner rank than himselfe, should enjoy such happinesse. Reas. 21

I beseech you therefore, let us learn that exhortation of the Apostle, *Let him that standeth, take heed lest he fall.* A watchfull Christian stands, when carelesse spirits have many a fall. It is no easie matter to keep our ground, we see tall Cedars oftentimes to shake and fall: how many are like buds in a frosty morning nippt suddenly: we have no more truth of grace, than we hold out to the end. U/a

But how shall we persevere in goodnesse?

1 Labour for true grace, what is sincere, is constant. That is true grace which the Spirit of God doth worke in us, and is not built on false Quisq.
Answ.
Preservative
against falling
away.

grounds, as to have respect to this or that man, or by ends of our owne.

John 16. 9.

Now that we may have true grace, let us labour to be thoroughly convinced of sinne, after which conviction of our evill wayes, grace will follow. To which end we should pray earnestly for the *Spirit*, which will convince us of all sinne, and worke this grace of constancy, and all other graces in us. For where the Spirit is, there is a favour and relish in all the wayes of God. How sweet is the goodnesse of God in our redemption, justification, and preservation, to a spirituall heart? if there be a relish in the meat, and not in the man, all is nothing.

2 Again, if we would hold out, get a strong resolution against all oppositions, (for know this) scandals will come, difficulties will arise, but firme resolution will carry us through all; those that goe forth to walk for pleasure, if a storme comes, they returne in again presently, whereas he that is to go a journey, though he meets with never so many storms and tempests, yet he will goe through all, because he hath so resolved before hand. Things are either good or evill, as a man willet them. The bent of the soule to God, makes a man good.

3 That thou maist persevere to the end, labour (as for the obedience of faith, to beleieve the truth, so) for the obedience of practice. Labour to know the truth, and to practise what thou knowest, that so thou maist be built on the rock Christ Jesus. If thou fall, it is thy owne fault, for building on the Sand. Therefore often put this question to thy soule, *Is this truth that I hold? would I dye for it?* If so, then hold it fast; otherwise suspect there is unsoundnesse.

4 Above all things get the love of God in thy heart, this will constrain us to obedience; if wee looke altogether upon our discouragements, alas we shall soon flagge and fall away: but if we eye our encouragements, it is impossible we should desert Christ, or his truth. Who would not hold out, having such a Captaine, and such a cause as we fight for. *Where the truth is received in the love of it, there is constancy.*

5 Strive to grow daily in a denyall of thy selfe, none can come to Heaven, but he must first strip himselfe of himselfe. He must not own his own wit, will, or affections; he must be emptyed of himselfe wholly. He must deny himselfe in all his aymes after the world, in the pleasure, profit, or preferment of it. He must not respect any thing, if he will follow Christ. A respective religion is never a sound religion. A true Christian hath a single eye, he serves God for himselfe. A man that hath worldly aymes, hath a double eye, as well as a double heart; such a one cannot but waver. Bring therefore single eyes, hearts, and aymes to receive the word. It is the great fault of many, they bring false hearts with them to the Ordinances of God. It is said of Israel, that he brought Egypt into the Wildernesse. So it is with most men, they thinke to have Religion, and their lusts together; but whatsoever doth begin in hypocrisie, will end in Apostasie. And know this, that he that hath Religion, needs not goe out for aymes, or good company. Hee hath acquaintance with God and Christ, and he hath an eternall inheritance

tance to aime at. There be encouragements enough in Religion it selfe, we need not goe out and looke abroad for more. I speake this the rather, because false aymes and ends is the ready meanes to undoe men, when we have respect to such a man, or such a thing in our practise of holinesse. *Joash* was a good King, all the while *Jehoiada* lived. This respect kept him in awe. The eye of a great Person keeps some men in, and causeth them oft to blaze forth in a greater show, than many others lesse outwardly apparant, but more inwardly sincere.

6 Labour therefore to have divine truths ingrafted in thee; not to have them loose, for then they will never grow, but get them ingrafted in thy heart, that so they may spring forth in thy life, as that which is set in a stock, turnes the stock into the same nature with it. We should imbrace truths inwardly. And indeed Gods Children will have truths as belonging to themselves. As a Wife receiving a Letter from her Husband, saith, This is sent to me, it belongs to me; so we should say in every truth, This was penned for mee, and directed to my soule in particular.

7 Lastly, that thou maist grow deeper in Religion, grow deeper and deeper in humiliation. Then a man is humble when he accounteth sinne his greatest evill, and grace his chiefe good: such a one will hold out in time of triall, and if temptations come on the right hand, of profit or preferment, Oh (saith he) Christ is better to me! And if sinne comes on the left hand to draw him aside, Oh (saith he) this is the vilest thing in the world; it is the worst of all evils. I may not yeeld to it.

But to goe on, from *Demas* his forsaking of *Paul*, and embracing of the present world, we learn, *That the love of Christ, and the world, cannot lodge together in one heart.*

The reason is, 1. they are two Masters ruling by contrary lawes. Christ was resolved to suffer, but the world saith, *spare thy selfe.* How can these agree? I deny not, but a man may be truly religious, and abound with all outward blessings; but the love of the world, and love of Religion cannot harbour in one breast. When the love of the world entred into *Judas*, it is said the Devill entred into him. Now Christ and Satan are contrary one to the other. Where Religion is, it carries the soule upward to Heaven, and heavenly things: but where the love of the world is, it brings the soule downward to the earth, and things below.

This discovereth the grosse hypocrisie of such men as labour to bring God and the world together, which cannot be; where the world hath got possession in the heart, it makes us false to God, and false to man, it makes us unfaithfull in our callings, and false to Religion it selfe. Labour therefore to have the world in its own place, under thy feete. For if we love the world, we shall breake with Religion, with our friend, with the Church, and with God himselfe. We see how it hindred the man in the Gospel from blessednes. When once Christ told him he must *sell all that he had, and give to the poore*, he went away sorrowfull,

Obser.

Reas. 1.

Use.

rowfull, for he had great possessions. Oh how doe these things steale the good Word out of our hearts, as the Birds did the seed that was on the highway side? It even choaks the Word, as the *Tares did the Corn*, when it was sprung up. Where this worldly love is, there can be no true profession of Christ, let men delude themselves never so much.

Quest.

But how shall I know I love the world?

Ans.

That will be seene by observing the bent of our heart how it is sway-ed towards God and his service, and how toward things below; when two Masters are parted, their servants will be known whom they serve, by following their owne Master. Blessed be God in these times, wee enjoy both Religion and the world together, but if times of suffering should approach, then it would be known whose servants we are. Consider therefore before hand what thou wouldst doe, if trouble and persecution should arise, wouldst thou stand out for Christ, and set light by liberty, riches, credit, all in comparison of him?

Yet we must know it is not the world simply, that draws our heart from God and goodnesse, but the love of the world; Worldly things are good in themselves, and given to sweeten our passage to Heaven; they sweeten the profession of Religion; therefore bring not a false report upon the world, it is thy falsnes that makes it hurtfull, in loving it so much: Use it as a servant all thy dayes, and not as a Master, and thou maist have comfort therein. It is not the world properly that hurts us, but our setting our hearts upon it; When as God should be in our thoughts, our spirits are even drunk with the cares below. Thornes will not prick of themselves, but when they are grasped in a mans hand, they pricke deepe; so this world and the things thereof are all good, and were all made of God, for the benefit of his creature, did not our immoderate affection make them hurtfull; which indeed imbitters every sweet unto us. This is the root of all evill; when once a mans heart is set upon the world, how doth he set light by God, and the peace of his conscience, to attain his ends? How doth he breake with God, his truth, religion and all, to satisfie a lust? And indeed as wee fasten our love, so we are either good or bad; we are not as we know, but as we love; if we set our love on earthly things, wee our selves become base and earthly: but if we love heavenly things, our conversations will be spirituall and divine; our affections are those things which declare what we are, if we do not love Religion, it is no matter what we know, or talk of it.

He that loves the world, brings it into the Church with him, it is chiefe in his thoughts, and therefore he carries it about with him in his heart where ever he goes; as it is said of *Israel*, they carried *Egypt* into the *Wildernesse*, so these bring the world to the ordinances of God, they come to the hearing of the Word like Drones, leaving their stings behind them.

Paul saith not here, *Demas did forsake him* for feare of persecution: but for the love of the world; faults are in their aggravation as they are

in deliberation: *Peter* denied his Master, but it was not with deliberation; whereas *Demas* did it in his cold blood; he loved the world, he set up the creature in his heart higher than the Creator.

Labour therefore to know the world, that thou maist detest it: In Religion, the more we know, the more we will love: but all the worldly things, the more we know, the lesse we will affect them; as a picture a-farre off, it will shew well, but come near it, and it is not so: let us see then what the world is, alas, it is but the present world, which will vanish away suddenly, poor *Demas* thought a Bird in the hand was worth two in the bush, and therefore he would brave it out a while, but alas what is become of him now? A Worldling oftentimes in seeking these things, looseth himselfe and the world to: but Christian never looseth that which he seekes after, God and Christ, and the things of a better life: the more we know the vanities of the world, and the excellencies of grace, the more we will love the one, and hate the other.

Labour then for faith, that you may overcome the world; it was an excellent speech of Christ when he sent forth his Disciples, *did you lack any thing?* and they said, *Nothing at all.* Labour therefore for faith to rely on the promise, for provision, protection, and all things needfull. If God be our Shepheard, we are sure to lack nothing.

And cheerish a waking heart, lay hold of eternall life; the way to get this is not to be drunk of the world, but be wise, redeeming your time, and ballance these earthly things with heavenly. See what these fading comforts ere to eternity. All the things we see here are temporall, but the things which are not seene, they are eternall: therefore we should let our affections run the right way, and have *Abrahams* eyes to see a far off, and feed our meditations with the things which we shall have hereafter, as *Moses* did.

I beseech you let us prize the favour of God above all that the earth affords. What though we endure hardnesse here, did Christ leave heaven to suffer for us, and shall not we suffer some straights for him? Faith can see a greater good in Christ than in the creature; this is that that will set out the vanity of the world, and the excellency of Heaven; the certainty of the one, and the perishing condition of the other; it will make things to come as present with us, and finde out a sufficiencie in the worst estate.

CHRIST

CHRIST
IS BEST;
OR,
A SWEET PASSAGE TO GLORY:

Preached at the Funerall of Mr *Sherland*, late
Recorder of NORTHAMPTON.

Together with the most vertuous life, and heavenly end of that Religious Gentleman.

By RICHARD SIBBS D. D. Master of *Katherine-Hall* in
Cambridge, and Preacher at *Graves-Inne*. LONDON.

PSAL. 42. 2.

*My soul thirsteth for God, even for the living God, when shall
I come and appeare before him?*

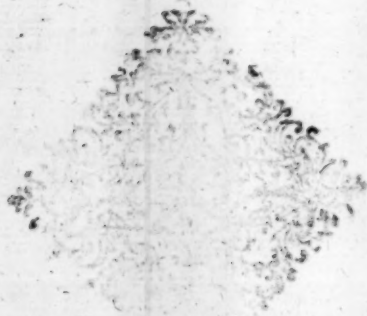


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Together with the most valuable life and
very end of that Religion, Christianity.
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My soul thirsteth for God, even for the living God, when shall
I come and appear before him?



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CHRIST IS BEST,
O R,
A SWEET PASSAGE
TO GLORY.

SERM. XI.

PHIL. I. 23, 24.

For I am in a strait between two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ which is best of all; nevertheless to abide in the flesh, is most needfull for you.



He Apostle Paul here, had a double desire, one in regard of himselfe, *to be with Christ*; another out of his love of Gods Church and people, *to abide still in the flesh*, and between these two he is in a great strait, not knowing which to chuse; but the love of the Church of Christ triumphed in him, above the love of his own salvation; so as he was content out of selfe-denyall to want the joyes of Heaven for a time, that he might yet further comfort the people of God on earth.

In the words you have, 1. *S. Pauls straits*, 2. his desires that caused them, as in regard of himselfe, which was *to be with Christ*; so in respect of the Church of God, which was *to abide still here*, 3. the rea-

sons of both, 1. *to be with Christ*, is farre better for mee, 2. *to abide in the flesh*, more needfull for you: and 4. his resolution upon all, being willing for the Saints good *still to abide with them*, rather than go to Heaven and enjoy his own happinesse.

S. Pauls toule was as a Ship between two winds, tossed up and down, and as Iron between two Loadstones drawn first one way, then another; the one Loadstone was his own good to be in Heaven, the other was the good of Gods people to abide still in the flesh.

Obfer.

Obferve hence, *that the servants of God are oftentimes in great straits*; some things are so exceeding bad, that without any deliberation or delay at all, we ought presently to abominate them, as Satans temptations to sinne, to distrust, despaire; some things also are so good that we should immediately cleave unto them, as matters of Religion and piety, there should be no delay in these holy busineses; deliberation here argues weaknesse. Some things (again) are of an ambiguous and doubtfull nature, requiring our best consideration, such was Pauls strait in this place; he had reasons waying him on both sides, and such is the happy estate of a Christian, that whatsoever he had chosen, had been well for him, only God who rules our judgements will have us to make choise; God might have determined whether Paul should live or dye, but he would not without Pauls choice; that which is good is not good to us, but upon choice and advice, when God hath given us abilities to discourse and examine things, he will have us make use of them, and therefore the Apostle useth reasons on both sides, *It is better to dye for me, It is better to live for you.*

Luke 12. 18.

Wicked men have their *deliberations* and their straits too, but it is with the rich man in the Gospell. What they shall doe; how they may pull down their Barnes and build bigger. Their maine strait is at the hour of death; *live they cannot, die they dare not*, there being so much guilt of sinne upon their consciences, that they know not which way to turne themselves; oh what fearefull straits will sin bring men into? but the Apostle was straitned in an higher nature than this, whether it were better for the glory of God (which he aimed at above all) for him to goe to heaven and enjoy happinesse in his own person, or to abide still for the comfort of Gods Saints on earth.

The ground of this difficulty and strait, was his present desire.

I have a desire.

Desires are the immediate issue of the soule, the motion and stirring of the same to something that likes it; when there is any thing set before the soul, having a *magneticall* force, as the Loadstone to draw out the motions thereof, we call that desire, though for the present it enjoys it not.

Rom. 7.

S. Pauls desire was, first spirituall, not after happinesse so much as holinesse; Oh miserable man that I am (saith he) who shall deliver me from this body of death, his desire of death was to be freed from the body of sinne, more than to be taken out of the flesh, and his desire of holinesse

nasse to have Christs Image stamped on his soule, was more than of eternall happinesse; nature cannot doe this, its a worke above the flesh, for that will not heare of departing, but rather bids God and Christ depart from it.

2. This desire came from a taste of sweetnesse in communion with Christ; and those desires that most ravish the soule in apprehension of heavenly things, are ever the most holy, S. Paul knew what a sweet communion Christ was.

3. It was a constant desire, he doth not say *I desire*, but *I have a desire*, I carry the same about me, and that carries me to a love of Christ and his members.

4. It was efficacious, not a naked velleity, not a wish of the sluggard, I would, and I would, but a strong desire carrying him even through death it selfe, to Christ: desires thus qualified, are blessed desires, as where we see vapours arise, there are springs usually below them, so where these desires are, there is alwayes a spring of grace in that soule: Nothing characterizeth a Christian so much as holy and Blessed desires, for there is no hypocrisie in them.

I desire to depart.

There must be a *parting* and a *departing*: there must be a *parting* in this world with all outward excellencies, from the sweet enjoyment of the creatures: there must be a *parting* between soule and body, between friend and friend, and whatever is near and dear unto us, all shall determine in death.

And there must be a *departing* also, here we cannot stay long, away we must, we are for another place. Oh that we could make use of these common truths! how farre are wee from making a right use of the *mysteries* of salvation, when we cannot make use of common truths which we have daily experience of? Holy *Moses* considering the suddennesse of his departure hence, begged of God to *teach him to number his dayes*, that he might apply his heart unto wisdom.

Seeing we must depart hence, let us get what good we can one from another betimes: Take good from thy Minister while thou mayest; Let not thy friend goe to Heaven till thou hast got some spirituall increase by him.

Death is but a *departing*, which word is taken from loosing from the shore, or removing of a ship to another coast; wee must all be unloosed from our houses of clay, and be carryed to another place, to Heaven: There is more comfort in our joyning with Christ, than there is discomfort in our unloosing from the earth; we make a blessed change. *Paul* labours to sweeten so harsh a thing as death, by comfortable expressions of it; It is but a Sleep a going home, a laying aside our earthly *Tabernacle*, to teach us this point of heavenly wisdom, that we should look on death as it is now in the Gospel, not as it was in the Law and by nature, for so it is a passage to Hell, and lets us in to all miseries whatsoever.

Some things are desireable for themselves, as happinesse and holinesse; some things are desireable not for themselves, but as they make way to better things, being sowre, and bitter to nature themselves, as *Physick* is desired not for it selfe, but for health; we desire health for it selfe, and physick for health, so to be with *Christ* is a thing desireable of it selfe, but because we cannot come to *Christ*, but by the dark passage of death, saith *Paul*, I desire to depart, that so I may have free accesse to him. *Moses* chose the reproach of *Christ*, before the treasure of *Egypt*; not that he loved reproach, but because he could not have *Christ* without it. So because we cannot enjoy the sweet presence of God without death, we may earnestly long after a dissolution; and thus was death the object of *S. Pauls* desire here; viz. So farre as it made way for better things.

I desire to depart.

To be with *Christ* that came from Heaven to be here on earth with us; and descended that we should ascend; to be with him that hath done and suffered so much for us, to be with *Christ* that delighted to be with us, to be with *Christ* that emptied himself and became of no reputation, that became poore to make us rich, to be with *Christ* our Husband now contracted here, that all may be made up fully in heaven, this was the thing *Paul* desired.

Quest.
Answ.

Why doth he not say, I desire to be in Heaven? Because heaven is not heaven without *Christ*, it is better to be in any place with *Christ*, than to be in heaven it selfe without him; all delicacies without *Christ* are but as a funerall banquet, where the Master of the feast is away, there is nothing but solemnnesse; what is all, without *Christ*? I say the joyes of heaven without *Christ*; he is the very Heaven of Heaven.

True love is carryed to the person; It is adulterous love, to love the thing, or the gift more than the person. *S. Paul* loved the person of *Christ*, because he felt sweet experience that *Christ* loved him; his love was but a reflection of *Christs* love first, he loved to see *Christ*, to embrace him, and enjoy him, that had done so much and suffered so much for his soule, that had forgiven him so many finnes, &c.

The reason is, because it is best of all; To be with *Christ* is to beat the spring head of all happinesse, it is to be in our proper element: every creature thinks it selfe best in its owne element, that is the place it thrives in, and enjoyes his happinesse in; now *Christ* is the element of a Christian.

A Saint of God is out of his element here; Alas this is a place of spares; this is indeed the Gate of Heaven, and if Heaven be not entred into here, we shall never possesse it hereafter. What is the reason the humane nature of *Christ* was so excellent a thing? but because it was neare unto God. And why is a Christian in this present life happier than other men? surely for no other reason, but because he is nearer to *Christ*. A true Christian is now with *Christ* by faith, and *Christ* is with him by his blessed Spirit: but alas this satisfieth him not. A gra-

cious

cious soule hath never enough of Christ till he be in Heaven with him; he thinks whatsoever he hath here is nothing to that. In Heaven we shall know Christ fully, and enjoy him perfectly, there we shall see him face to face.

Againe, it is farre better, because to be with Christ is to have the *marriage consummate*: is not *marriage* better than the contract? is not home better than absence? to be with Christ is to be at home; is not *triumph* better than to be in conflict? but to be with Christ is to triumph over all enemies, to be out of Satans reach; is not *perfection* better than *imperfection*? here all is but imperfect, in heaven there is perfection, therefore that is much better than any good below; for all are but shadows here, there is reality; What is riches? what are the worne-eaten pleasures of the world? What are the honours of the earth, but meer shadows of good? *At the right hand of Christ are pleasures indeed, honours indeed, riches indeed*; there is reality.

If we speake of grace, and good things, it is better to bee with Christ than enjoy the graces and comforts of the *Holy Ghost* here; Why? because they are all stained, and mixed, here our peace is interrupted with the desertion, and trouble, here the joyes of the *holy Ghost* are mingled with sorrow, here the grace in a man is with combats of *flsh*, and *spirit*, but in Heaven there is pure peace, pure joy, pure grace; for what is glory but the perfection of grace; grace indeed is glory here, but it is glory with conflict: the Scripture calls grace glory sometimes, but it is glory with imperfection, Beloved, *perfection* is better than imperfection, therefore to be with Christ is farre better.

And is it much farre better to die, that we may be with Christ, than to live here a conflicting life? Why should we then feare death, that is but a passage to Christ? It is but a grim servant that lets us into a glorious Palace, that strikes off our bolts, that takes off our rags that we may be cloathed with better robes, that ends all our misery, and is the beginning of all our happinesse, why should we therefore be affraid of death? it is but a departure to a better condition? It is but as *Jordan* to the Children of *Israel*, by which they passed to *Canaan*, it is but as the *Red-sea* by which they were going that way; therefore we have no reason to feare death: of it selfe it is an enemy indeed, but now it is harmelesse, nay now it is become a friend, amicable to us, a *sweet friend*; it is one part of the Churches joynture, death; *All are yours* saith the Apostle, *Paul* and *Apollo's*, life and death, death is ours and for our good, it doth us more good than all the friends we have in the world, it determines and ends all our misery, and sinne; and it is the suburbs of Heaven, it lets us into those joyes above. It is a shame for Christians therefore, to be affraid of that that *Paul* here makes the object of his desire.

But may not a good Christian feare death?

I answer, *Not*; so farre as a Christian is led with the Spirit of God, and is truly spirituall, for the Spirit carries us upward; but as farre as we are earthly and carnall, and byassed downward to things below, we

Psal. 39.

are loath to depart hence; In some cases Gods Children are affraid to die, because their accounts are not ready, though they love Christ, and are in a good way, yet notwithstanding because they have not prepared themselves by care, as a woman that hath her husband abroad, and desires his coming, but all is not prepared in the house, therefore shee desires that he may stay a while; so the soule that is not exact, that is not in that frame that it should be in; saith, *Oh stay a while that I may recover my strength, before I goe hence and be no more seene*; but as farre as we are guided by the Spirit of God, sanctifying us, and are in such a condition as we should be in, so farre the thoughts of death ought not to be terrible to us, nor indeed are they.

Beloved, there is none but a Christian that can desire death; because it is the end of all comfort here, it is the end of all callings and employments, of all sweetnesse whatsoever in this world. If another man that is not a Christian, desire Heaven, he desires it not (as Heaven) or to be with Christ (as Christ) he desires it under some notion suitable to his corruption: for our desires are as our selves are, as our aymes are; no carnall worldly man, but hath carnall worldly aymes; a worldly man cannot goe beyond the world, it is his spheare, a carnall man cannot goe beyond the flesh, therefore a carnall man cannot desire Heaven, a man that is under the power of any lust, can desire nothing but the satisfying of that lust. Heaven is no place for such; none but a childe of God can desire that: For if we consider *heaven*, and *to bee with Christ*, to be perfect holinesse, can he desire it that hates holinesse here? can he desire the Image of God upon him, that it hates it in others, and in himselfe too? can he desire the communion of Saints, that (of all societies) hates it the most? can he desire to be free from sin, that ingulges himselfe continually in sin? he cannot, and therefore as long as he is under the thraldome and dominion of any lust, he may desire Heaven indeed, but it is onely so farre as he may have his lusts there, his pleasures, honours, and riches there too; if he may have Heaven with that, he is contented: but alas, brethren, Heaven must not be so desired. S. Paul did otherwise, he desired *to be dissolved to be with Christ*, he desired it as the perfection of the Image of God, under the notion of holinesse and freedome from sinne, as I said before.

Which is farre better.

Obser.

Againe, we see that God reserves the best for the last, Gods last workes are his best workes, the new heaven and the new earth, are the best; the second wine that Christ created himselfe, was the best; spirituall things are better than naturall; A Christians last is his best.

God will have it so for the comfort of Christians, that every day they live, they may think, My best is behinde, my best is to come, that every day they rise, they may thinke, I am nearer Heaven one day than I was before, I am nearer death, and therefore nearer to Christ, what a solace is this to a gracious heart? A Christian is a happy man in his life,

life, but happier in his death, because then he goes to Christ, but happier of all in Heaven, for then he is with Christ. How contrary to a carnall man, that lives according to the sway of his owne base lusts? he is miserable in his life, more miserable in his death, but most miserable of all after death, I beseech you lay this to heart, methinks considering that death is but a way for us to be with Christ, which is farre better, this should sweeten the thinking of death to us, and we should comfort our selves daily, that we are nearer happinesse.

But how shall we attaine this sanctified sweet desire that Paul had, to die and be with Christ?

Quest.

Let us carry our selves as Paul did, and then we shall have the same desires; S. Paul (before death) in his life time, had his conversation in Heaven, his mind was there, and his soule followed after; there is no mans soule comes into Heaven, but his minde is there first. It was an easie matter for him to desire to be with Christ, having his conversation in Heaven already: Paul in meditation was where he was not, and he was not where he was, he was in Heaven when his body was on earth.

Answ.

Phil. 3. 1.

Secondly, againe, S. Paul had loosed his affections from all earthly things, therefore it was an easie matter for him, to desire to bee with Christ, *I am crucified to the world, and the world is crucified to me, &c.* If once a Christian comes to this passe, death will be welcome to him; those whose hearts are fastened to the world, cannot easily desire Christ.

Gal. 6. 14.

Thirdly, again, holy S. Paul laboured to keepe a good conscience in all things, *Herein I exercise my selfe to have a good conscience towards God and men, &c.* It is easie for him to desire to be dissolved, that hath his conscience sprinkled with the blood of Christ, free from a purpose of living in any sinne: But where there is a stained, defiled, polluted conscience, there cannot be this desire: for the heart of man naturally, as the Prophet saith, *casts up myre and dirt*, it casts up feares, and objections, and murmurings, and repinings: Oh beloved, we think not what mischief sinne will do us when we suffer it to sease upon our consciences; when it is once written there *with the clew of a Diamond*, and *with a pen of Iron*, who shall get it out? Nothing but great repentance and faith, applying the blood of Christ, it is no easie matter to get it off there, and to get the conscience at peace againe; and when conscience is not appeased, there will be all clamours within, it will feare to appeare before the judgement Seat; a guilty conscience trembles at the mention of death. Therefore I wonder how men that live in swearing, in loosenesse, in filthinesse, in debauchednesse of life, that labour to satisfie their lusts and corruptions, (I wonder how they) can think of death without trembling, considering that they are under the guilt of so many finnes: Oh beloved, the exercising of the heart to keepe a cleare conscience, can onely breed this desire in us to depart, and to be with Christ: you have a company of wretched persons (proud enough in their own conceits, and censorious, nothing can please them) whose whole

Acts 24. 16.

Jer. 17. 11

whole life is acted by Satan joyning with the lusts of their flesh, and they doe nothing but put stings into death every day, and arm death against themselves, which when once it appears, their conscience, which is a Hell within them, is awakened, and where are they? they can stay here no longer, they must appear before the dreadfull Judge, and then where are all their pleasures, and contentments, for which they neglected Heaven, and happinesse, peace of conscience, and all? Oh therefore let us walk holily with our God, and maintain inward peace all we can, if we desire to depart hence with comfort.

Gal. 2-19.

Fourthly, againe, *Paul* had got assurance that he was in Christ by his union with him; *I live not*, saith he, *but Christ lives in me*: therefore labour for assurance of salvation, that you may feele the Spirit of Christ in you, sanctifying, and altering your carnall dispositions to be like his, *I know whom I have trusted*, saith he; he was as sure of his salvation as if he had it already. How few live, as if they intended any such matter as this, assurance of salvation, without which how can we ever desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ? Will a man leave his house, though it be never so meane, when he knows not whither to goe? will a man leave the prison when he knows he shall be carried to execution? Oh no, he had rather be in the dungeon still; So when there is guilt on the soule, that it is not assured of salvation, but rather hath cause to feare the contrary: can it say, *I desire to depart, and be with Christ, &c*? No; they had rather abide in the flesh still, if they could for ever, for all eternity; therefore if we would come to *Pauls* desire, labour to come to the frame of the holy Apostles spirit, he knew whom he had beleevd, he was assured that nothing could separate him from the love of God, *neither life, nor death, nor any thing whatsoever could befall him*.

Rom. 8.

Fifthly, *Paul* had an art of sweetning the thoughts of death, he considered it onely as a departure from earth, to Heaven, when death was presented unto him as a passage to Christ, it was an easie matter, to desire the same: therefore it should be the Art of Christians, to present death as a passage to a better life, to labour to bring our souls into such a condition, as to think death not to be death to us, but the death of it selfe, death dyes when I dye, and I begin to live when I die: It is a sweet passage to life, we never live till we die. This was *Pauls* Art, he had a care to looke beyond death, to heaven, and when he looked upon death, he looked on it but as a passage to Christ, so let it be our art and skill: would we cherish a desire to die? let us looke on death as a passage to Christ, and looke beyond it to heaven: All of us must goe through this darke passage to Christ, which when we consider as *Paul* did, it will be an easie matter to dye.

I come now to the next words, *Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needfull for you*.

This is the other desire of *Paul* that brought him into this strait, he was troubled whether he should die, which was farre better for himselfe, or live, which was more needfull for them: but the love of Gods peo.

people did prevaile in holy S. Paul, above the desire of heaven, and the present enjoying his owne happinesse. Oh the power of grace in the hearts of Gods children, that makes them content to bee without the joyes of Heaven for a time, that they may do God service, in serving his Church here upon earth.

Observe hence, that the lives of worthy men, especially Magistrates, and Ministers are very needfull for the Church of God.

Obser. 11

The reason is, because Gods manner of dispensation is, to convey all good to men, by the means of men like our selves, for the most part, and this he doth to knit us into a holy communion one with another, therefore it is needfull that holy men should abide; in regard of the Church of God, their lives are very usefull.

If we consider the good, and great benefit that comes by them, we shall easily yeeld to this; For what a deale of sinne doth a good Magistrate stop and hinder? when there were good Judges and good Kings in Israel, see what a reformation there was: *Antichrist* could not come in when the Romane Empire flourished, though now the Romane Empire hinder the fall of *Antichrist*, because *Antichrist* hath given her the cup of fornication, and they are drunk with the Whores cup, but at the first it was not so. Beloved, whilst good Magistrates, and good Ministers continue in a continue in a place, there is a hinderance of heresies, and sinne, &c. If they be once removed, there is a floodgate opened for all manner of sin, and corruption to breake in at. Yea, there is abundance of good comes in by gracious persons.

2 Thes. 2.

First, by their counsell and direction; *The lips of the righteous feed many,*

Secondly, by their reformation of abuses, by planting Gods ordinances, and good orders, whereby Gods wrath is appeased; they stand in the gap and stop evill, they reforme it, and labour to establish that which is pleasing to God.

Thirdly, gracious persons, in what condition soe ver they are, carry the blessing of God with them: wheresoever they are, God and his blessings goes along with them.

Fourthly, they doe a great deale of good by their pattern, and example, they are the *lights of the world*, that give ayme to others in the darknesse of this life.

Fifthly, they can by their prayers binde God, (as it were) that he shll not inflict his judgements, they doe a world of God by this way, a praying force and army is as good as a fighting army. Moses did as much good by prayer, as the Souldiers in the valley when they fought with *Amelek*; they are favourites with God in heaven, therefore S. Paul saith, *It is needfull for you that I abide in the flesh*: Gracious men are publique treasures, and storehouses wherein every man hath a share, a portion: they are publique springs in the wildernesse of this world to refresh the soules of people: they are trees of righteousness that stretch out their boughs for others to shelter under, and to gather fruit from: You have an excellent picture of this in *Daniel*, in the dreame of *Nebuchadnezzar*, the

Dan. 4. 21.

Magi-

Magistrates there are compared to a great tree, wherein the Birds build their nests, and the beasts shelter themselves: so a good *Magistrate*, especially if he be in *great place*, is as a great tree, for comfort and shelter: Oh beloved, the lives of good men are very usefull. A good man (saith the Philosopher) is a common good, because as soone as ever a man becomes gracious, he hath a publique minde, as he hath a publique place; nay, whether he hath a publique place or no, he hath a publique minde; It is needfull therefore that there be such men alive.

Micah. 7.

If this be so, then we may lament the death of worthy men, because we loose part of our strength in the losse of such, Gods custome being to convey much good by them; and when there is scarcity of good men, we should say with *Micah*, *Woe is me, the good is perished from the earth*: they keep judgements from a place, and derive a blessing upon it, howsoever the world judgeth them, and accounts them not worthy to live, yet God accounteth the world unworthy of them, they are Gods *Jewels*, they are his treasure, and his portion, therefore we ought to lament their death, and to desire their lives; and we ought to desire our owne lives, as long as we may be usefull to the Church, and be content to wait heaven for a time. Beloved, it is not for the good of Gods children that they live; as soone as ever they are in the state of grace, they have a title to heaven, but it is for others: when once we are in Christ, we live for others, not for our selves; that a father is kept alive, it is for his *childrens* sake; that good *Magistrates* are kept alive, it is for their subjects sake; that a good *Minister* is kept alive out of the present enjoying of heaven, it is for the peoples sake, that God hath committed to him to instruct; for as *Paul* saith here, in regard of my own particular, *it is better for me to be with Christ*.

v/s.

If God convey so much good by worthy men to us, then what wretches are they that maligne them, persecute them, &c. speak ill of those that speake to God for them? doth the world continue for a company of wretches, a company of prophane, blasphemous, loose, disorderly livers? Oh no, for if God had not a Church in the world, a company of good people, *heaven* and *earth* would fall in pieces, there would be an end presently; It is for good people (only) that the world continues, they are the pillars of the tottering world, they are the stakes in the fence, they are the foundation of the building, and if they were once taken out, all would come down, there would be a confusion of all, therefore those that oppose and disquiet gracious and good men, are enemies to their own good, they cut the bough which they stand on, they labour to pull downe the house that covers themselves, being blinded with *malice*, and a *diabolicall spirit*: take heed of such a disposition, it comes neare to the sinne against the *holy Ghost*, to hate any man for goodnesse; because perhaps his good life reproacheth us, such a one would hate Christ himselfe if he were here; how can a man desire to be with Christ, when he hates his Image in another? therefore if God convey so much good by other men that are good, let us make

make much of them, as publique persons, as instruments of our good; take away malice, and pride, and a poysonfull spirit and all their good is ours: what hinders that we have no good by them? pride, and an envious spirit, &c.

A second thing that I observe hence is this; *Holy and gracious men that are led by the Spirit of God can deny themselves, and their owne best good, for the Churchs benefit.* They know that God hath appointed them as instruments to convey good to others, and knowing this they labour to cometo *Pauls* spirit here, to desire to live, to have life in patience, and death in desire in regard of themselves; for it were much better for a good man to be in heaven out of misery, out of this conflicting condition with the Devill and devillish minded men.

Obst.

The reason is, because a good man as soon as he is a good man, hath the spirit of love in him, and *love seeketh not its own*, but the good of another, and as the love of Christ and the love of God possesseth, and seizeth upon the soule, so self-love decayes; what is gracious love, but a decay of self-love, the more self-love decayes, the more we deny our selves.

Reas. 1.

Againe, Gods people have the Spirit of Christ in them, who *min- ded not his owne things*; If Christ had minded his owne things, where had our salvation been? Christ was content to leave Heaven, and to take our nature upon him, to be *Emanuel*, God with us; that we might be with God for ever in heaven; he was content not onely to leave heaven, but to be borne in the wombe of a *Virgin*, he was content to stoop to the grave; he stooped as low as hell, in love to us. Now where Christs Spirit is, it will bring men from their altitudes, and excellencies, and make them to stoop, to serve the Church, and account it an honour to be an instrument to doe good; Christ was content to be accounted not onely a *servant of God*, but of the Churches; *My righteous servant*, &c. Those that have the Spirit of Christ, have a spirit of selfe-deniall of their owne, wee see the blessed *Angels* are content to be *Ministring* spirits for us, and it is thought to be the sinne of the Devill, pride, when he scorned to stoop, to the keeping of man an inferiour creature to himselfe. The blessed Angells doe not scorne to attend upon a poore child, little ones: A Christian is a consecrated person, and he is none of his own, he is a sacrifice as soon as he is a Christian, he is Christs, he gives himselfe to Christ; and as he gives himself, so he gives his life, and all to Christ, as *Paul* saith of the *Corinths*, they gave themselves, and their goods to him: when a Christian gives himselfe to Christ, he gives all to Christ: all his labour and paines, and whatsoever he knows that Christ can serve himselfe of him for his Churches good and his glory; he knows that Christ is wiser than he, therefore he resignes himselfe to his disposall, resolving, if he live, *he lives to the Lord*; and if he die, *he dies to the Lord*; that so, whether he live or die, *he may be the Lords*.

Esay 53. 11.

Rom 14. 8.

Oh beloved, that we had the spirit of *S. Paul*, and the Spirit of Christ to set us awork, to doe good while we are here, to deny our selves;

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Ecclef. 9. 15.

Gen. 39. 3.

selves; Oh it would be meat and drinke, as it was to our blessed Saviour Christ, to doe good all kinde of wayes; consider all the capacities and abilities we have to good, this way, and that way, in this relation, and that relation, that we may be trees of righteousness, that the more we beare, the more we may beare; God will mend his own trees, he will purge them, and prune them, to bring forth more fruit, God cherisheth fruitfull trees: in the law of Moses, when they besieged any place, he commanded them to spare fruitfull trees: God spares a fruitfull person till he have done his worke; we know not how much good one man may doe, though he be a meane person, sometimes one poore wise man delivereth the City, and the righteous delivereth the Island; Wee see for one servant, Joseph, Potiphar's house was blessed. Naaman had a poore Maid-servant, that was the occasion of his conversion. Grace will set any body a work, it puts a dexterity into any, though never so mean, they carry Gods blessing wheresoever they go, and they bethink themselves when they are in any condition to doe good, as he saith in Hester, God hath called me to this place, perhaps for this end: we should often put this *quare* to our selves, why hath God called me to this place? for such and such a purpose.

Now that we may be fruitfull as Paul was, let us labour to have humble spirits; God delights in an humble spirit, and not in a proud spirit, for that takes all the glory to it self; God delights to use humble spirits, that are content to stoop to any service for others, that think no office too mean.

Secondly, get loving hearts, love is full of invention, how shall I glorifie God? how shall I doe good to others? how shall I bring to heaven as many as I can? love is a sweet and boundlesse affection, full of holy devices.

Thirdly, labour to have sufficiency in our places, that you may have ability to doe good: Oh, when these meet together, ability and sufficiency, and a willing, a large, and gracious heart, and a fit object to do good to: What a deale of good is done then?

Fourthly, and when we finde opportunity of doing any good, let us resolve upon it, resolve to honour God, and serve him in spite of flesh and blood: for we must get every good worke that we do out of the fire, as it were; we must get it out with travaile, and pains; we carry that about us that will hinder us, let us therefore labour to have sincere aymes in that we do to please God, and then resolve to do all the good we can.

To stir us up to be more and more fruitfull in our places, let us consider we live for others, and not for our selves, when wee are good Christians once. It was a good speech of that godly *Palsgrave*, great Grand Father to him that is, (Frederick the godly they called him) when he was to dye, *sais vobis* (saith he) *I have lived hitherto for you, now let me live for my selfe*; we live here all our life for others, therefore let us think while we live how we may doe most good in the Church of God.

For encouragement thereunto consider, God will undertake to recompence all the good we doe, to a cup of *cold water*; we shall not lose a sigh, a groane, for the Church; God would account himselfe dishonoured if it should not be rewarded, he hath pawned his faithfulness upon it; *He is not unfaithfull to be unmindfull of your good works.* Heb. 6. 10.

Nay, we have a present reward and contentment of conscience; as light accompanies fire, so peace and joy accompany every good action; All is not reserved for heaven, a Christian hath some beginnings of happinesse here, when he doth that that is contrary to flesh and bloud, how full of sweet joy is a fruitfull soule? those that are fruitfull in their places never want arguments of good assurance of salvation. It is your lazie luke-warm Christian that wants assurance. Therefore I beseech you be stirred up, to live *desired in the world*, and *dye lamented*; labour to be usefull in your places all you can, to be as the *Olive* and *Fig-tree*, delighting God and man, and not to *cumber the ground* of the Church with barrennesse: sinnes of *omission*, because men were not fruitfull in their places, was a ground of damnation; *Cast the unprofitable servant into utter darknesse*: put case he did no harme, I, but he was *unprofitable*; such was the cursed disposition of *Ephraim*, he brought forth fruit to himselfe; Oh this looking to our selves, when we make our selves the beginning and the end of all the good we doe, it is an argument of a barren person, none ever came to heaven but those that denied themselves. Match. 25.

I see I cannot proceed in this point, you may by the Spirit of God enlarge it in your thoughts, and bring home what hath been said to your own soules, labour that you may be such, as others may make use of you, and not be the burthens and calamities of the time, as many are, that live for nothing but to doe good men good by vexing of them, that is all the good they doe, by vexing their patience, they exercise their grace a contrary way; let us not be bryers and and unfruitful plants, labouring to be great by the publique miseries: As they say, great fishes grow bigge by devouring many little ones; as a Dragon comes to be great by devouring many little Serpents, so many grow great by the ruine of others; Oh beloved, it had been better for such that they had never been borne. Therefore as we desire to have comfort when we die, let us labour to be fruitfull while we live. S. Paul when the time came that he should die, when he had done his worke, you see he that was thus full of selfe-denyall, how gloriously he ended his dayes; The second Epistle to *Timothy* was the last Epistle that ever he wrote, and when he had done his worke, saith he, *I have fought a good fight, I have kept the faith, I have finished my course,* 2 Tim. 4. 7. *from henceforth there is a crown of righteousness reserved for me*; what a glorious end is here? and indeed those that are thus carefull, and fruitfull in their lives and conversations, end their dayes full of comfort, and resigne their soules to God with full assurance of a blessed change, and only those: For you have many, when they come to die, what hinders them? Oh I have been unfruitfull, I have not done that
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good that I might, I have not wrought out my salvation with fear and trembling. In such a thing I have done ill, such a thing I have omitted, so they are enemies to their own comfort: inlarge this in your own meditations, and consider what will comfort you hereafter, when you shall need most comfort: So I leave the text, and come to the occasion.

25 This holy and blessed man, whose Funerall now we solemnize, was of *S. Pauls spirit*, he did desire to die, & to be with Christ, he had a desire while he lived to take all opportunities to doe good: I speak of that time when he lived, that is, when he was good, for we live no longer than we are good: let us not reckon that Life wherein we do no good. After God had wrought upon his heart, he had a publique heart to do good. If I wanted matter to speak of, I could tell you of his *alliance* and *birth*, having two worthy Judges of reverend esteem, the one his *Grandfather*, the other his *Uncle*; the one bred him, the other cherished and promoted his study and indeavours; but what should I speake of these things, when he had personall worth enough? I need not goe abroad to commend this man, for there were those graces and gifts in him, that made him so esteemed, that verily I thinke, no man of his place and yeares, lived more desired, and dyed more lamented.

1 For his *parts* of nature, they were pregnant and sollid, but as one said to *Melancthon*, his disposition and loving minde did gain as much love from men, as his parts, though they were great.

2 His learning was good, for beside his owne profession, he was a general Schooller, and had good skill in that we call *elegant learning*, and controverted points of divinity; he was a good Divine: Indeed in the turning of his life when he should have adventured upon a profession, he had some thoughts of being a *Divine*, had not his friends, especially his *Uncle*, Judge *Falverton*, disposed him otherwise, by promoting his study in the *Law*, and when he tooke upon him that profession, he grew so in it, that he was a credit to the profession, for integrity, sincerity, and ability.

3 For his *disposition* he was every way a man of an excellent sweet temper: *milde*, and yet *resolute*; *meek*, and yet *bold* where cause was; *discreet*, yet not *over-discreet*: so as not to stand out in a good cause in the defence of it; he was *humble*, yet thought himself *too good* to be instrumentall to any services, other then stood with the peace of his conscience; he was *tractable* and *gentle*, yet *immoveably* fixed to his principles of piety and honesty; he was *exact* in his life, yet not *cen-sorious*; very conscionable and *religious*, but without any vaine *curiosity*; indeed he was every way of a sweet temper, if he stood out in dislike of any, in any matter, he carryed it usually with evidence of such sincerity, and deniall of selfe-seeking, that he usually prevailed where he put in.

4 To come, to his private personall carriage, it was very pious, he was wont to sequester himselfe from his imployment and labour, to bring his heart under to God, to the guidance of Gods Spirit; his study was,

to

to study to die, for he gathered choise things out of the Sermons he heard about death, many years before he died, to lay up store of provision against that time. And two or three Termes before he died, he had a speciall care to enquire of *nearer communion with God*; he enquired of those he conversed with, of the way to attaine the same, and was willing to heare any discourses that tended that way.

For his care of the *Sabbath*, it was his delight, his custome was after Sermon to retire, and ruminare upon what he had heard, to turn it into his spirit: Alas, for want of this, how many Sermons are lost in this great City? how much seed is spilt in vain? What nourishment can there be without digestion? it is the second digestion that breeds nourishment; when we chew things, and call them to minde againe, and make them our owne: This was his custome every *Sabbath*.

For his carriage to others, he was a *constant friend*, and his study was to labour to make those good he conversed withall; he conversed with few but they were the better for him, he was so fruitfull; and he would have intimate society with none, but he would do good, or take good from them; you have many in the Society where he lived, that may blesse God all the dayes of their life, that ever they knew him.

For his carriage in his government of the place where he lived, I think there are none that are able to judge, but will give him the testimony of a faithfull prudent *governour*; he was so carefull of the Towne where he was *Recorder*, that he provided for them after his death, and gave them a large legacy, 200. *marke*, to set the poore on worke.

For the *Honourable Society* wherein he was a Governour, he carried himselfe with that resolution, for good order and good *exercises*, and was such a strict opposer of any abuse, which he judged to be so, that the House will have a speciall want of him: I feare, rather I desire from my soul, that that *Honourable Society* may so flourish, as they may have no want of good Master *Sherland*.

For his more *publique carriage*, by vertue of his place at *Northampton* where he was *Recorder*, he was called to be a member of the Body representative in *Parliament*, wherein both his ability, and spirit appeared to all that knew him; you may see by this what manner of man we have lost.

He died before he was come to the middle of his yeares, a young man to speake of, and he did a great deale of worke in a little time: God had ripened him for his businesse extraordinary; and gave him a spirit to bestirre himselfe, to do all the good he could: These be wondrous ill times, beloved, to lose such men as he was, therefore we have cause to lay it to heart the more, the *Common wealth* wants him, the *Town* and Country where he lived wil want him, the *Society* where he was a Governour will want him, the *Family* where he was a governour, will find a misse in him; he went wisely in and out, he was able for Family duties, he had more than ordinary sufficiency, he was of *Joshuahs* mind, *Chuse who you will serve, but I and my house will serve*

the Lord; and to helpe him the more, he had the happinesse to marry into a religious Family, he had a good helper.

Now for the Church, though his profession was the Law, yet that will have a great want of him, he was a hearty and true Promoter of the cause of Religion, and shewed his love to the Church, by his care of it; now he is departed, he gave foure hundred pounds to buy in Improvements, he gave an hundred pounds for the breeding up of poore Schollers, and there is never a good Minister round about where he lived, but had encouragement from him; Indeed he was a man of speciall use, and service; and as he honoured God in his life, so God hath honoured him in his death, as you may see by this honourable Assembly of worthy people, met in love to him.

His death was (as the death of strong men useth to be) with conflicts between nature and his disease, but with a great deal of patience; and in his sicknesse time, he would utter Pauls disposition, Oh saith he, *You keep me from heaven, you keep me from glory*, being displeased with those, that kept him alive with conference out of love.

He had a large heart to do good; for though he were fruitfull, and studied to be fruitfull, yet oft in his sicknesse in a complaining manner, he would say, *Oh, I have not bene so wise for my own soule, as I ought to be: I have not been provident enough in taking opportunities of doing and receiving good.*

Beloved, shall such a man as he was, so carefull, so fruitfull, so good, shall he complaine thus? what shall a company of us doe? Beloved, those that have warmed their hearts at the fire of Gods love, they think zeale it self to be coldnesse, and fruitfulnessse to be barrennesse; Love is a boundlesse affection, he spake not this from want of care, but love knows no bounds, therefore he tooke the more opportunities of doing good.

Well, I beseech you beloved, let not this example passe without making good use of it, God will call us to a reckoning, not only for what we heare, but for what we see: he will call us to a reckoning for the examples of his people, therefore as we see here what a holy disposition was in S. Paul, and in this blessed man now with God; so let us labour to finde the same disposition in our selves. Paul hath now his desire, he is dissolved, and he is with Christ, that is best of all. This holy man hath his desire, he desired not be kept from his glory and happinesse, on which his minde was set before; let us therefore labour with God in the use of good means, to have the same disposition. And in this moment let us provide for eternity: out of eternity before, and eternity after, issueth this little spot of time to doe good in. Let us sow to the spirit, account all time lost, that either we doe not, or take not good in; opportunity is Gods Angel: time is short, but opportunity is shorter; let us catch at all opportunities; this is the time of working, oh let us sow now: shall we goe to sowing then, when the time comes that we should reape? some begin to sow when they dye, that is the reaping time; while wee have time let us doe

doe all good, especially where God loves most, to those that are good.

Consider the standings and places that God hath set us in ; consider the advantages in our hands, the price that we have, consider *opportunity* will not stay long, let us therefore doe all the good we can, and so if we doe, beloved, we shall come at length to reape that, that this blessed Saint of God, S. *Paul* here in the text, and this blessed man, for whose cause we are now met, doe enjoy : Therefore if we desire to end our dayes in joy and comfort, let us lay the foundation of a comfortable death now betimes : To dye well is not a thing of that light moment, as some imagine ; it is no easie matter. But to dye well is a matter of every day ; let us daily doe some good that may helpe us at the time of our death, every day by repentance pull out the sting of some sinne, that so when death comes, we may have nothing to doe but to dye ; to dye *well* is the action of the *whole* life, he never dies well for the most part, that dies not daily, as *Paul* saith of himselfe, *I die daily* ; he laboured to loose his heart from the world, and worldly things, if we loose our hearts from the world, and die daily, how easie will it be to dye at last ? he that thinkes of the vanity of the world, and of death, and of being with Christ for ever, and is dying daily, it will be easie for him to end his dayes with comfort ; but the time being past, I will here make an end ; Let us desire God to make that which hath been spoken effectually, both concerning *Paul*, and likewise concerning this blessed man, for whose cause we are met together.

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THE CHURCHES VISITATION.

DISCOVERING

The many difficulties and tryals of Gods Saints
on Earth : shewing wherein the fountaine of their happi-
nesse consists . Arming Christians how to doe, and
suffer for Christ ; And directing them how to
commit themselves, and all their wayes to
God, in holinesse here, and hap-
pinesse hereafter.

Preached in sundry Sermons at *Graves-Inne*, LONDON.

By R. S. D. D.



LONDON,

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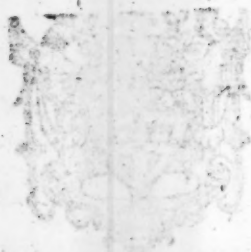
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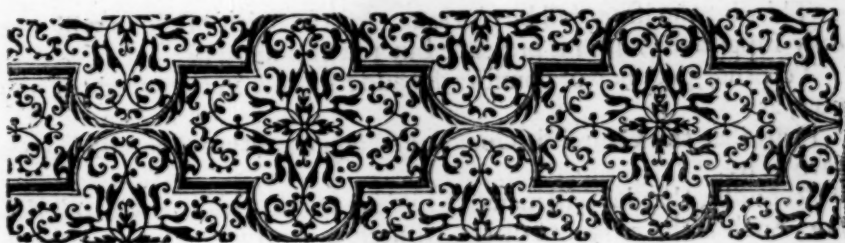
By Thomas Sturges, Minister of Christ Church, LONDON.

By R. A. D. D.



LONDON

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THE CHURCHES VISITATION:

SERM. XII.

1 PET. 4. 17, 18, 19.

For the time is come that judgement must begin at the house of God, and if it begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospell, &c.



OUR nature, as it is very backward to *doe* good, so likewise to *suffer* evill; therefore the blessed Apostle exhorts us at the latter end of this Chapter, *Not to think it strange concerning the Fiery triall*, but to *rejoyce* in as much as we are made partakers of *Christs sufferings*: wherein are laid downe many grounds of *patience* and *comfort* to the children of God.

Grounds of comfort against the fiery tryall propounded by the Apostle.

First, that the thought of trouble should not be *strange*, but *familiar* to them; Acquainting our thoughts with distresses, taketh away offence at them; though it be a *fiery tryall*, yet it shall consume nothing but dross.

Secondly, Christ joyneth with his people in their suffering, therefore

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therefore it is better to be in trouble *with* Christ, than in peace *without* him.

- 3 Thirdly, the issue will be glorious, for the Spirit of glory will not only support us with his presence, but rest still upon us.

To other grounds of comfort, he addeth some in the words of my text, as

- 1 First, that the Church is Gods *house*, and therefore he will have a care of it.

- 2 Secondly, that he will manifest his care toward his, in the fittest *season*; Such is the exigence of the Church and people of God, that they require a sharp visitation; and therefore such is Gods love, that he appoints out such a certain time as is best for them.

- 3 Thirdly, from the different condition of the *godly & ungodly* in *suffering*; both suffer, but differ much; 1. in order, *God begins with his own house*; 2. in measure, *where shall the ungodly appear?* their judgement shall be most terrible and certain, it is set down by way of interrogation, and admiration. *What shall their end be?* And as *Pharaohs* dreams were *doubled* for more certainty, so here is a double *question* to make the matter more out of question,

1. *What shall their end be that obey not the Gospel.*
2. *Where shall the ungodly and sinners appear?*

Here is no unnecessary waste of words and arguments, for the Spirit of God knows that all is little enough to fortifie the soule against the *evill day*; unless the soule be well ballaced, it will soone be overturned when stormes arise. Therefore the Apostle in these three verses sets down, 1. some *foundations* of comfort, and 2. an *incouragement* to build upon them, *wherefore let them that suffer, &c.*

The points
considerable
in the text.

The points considerable in the 17. verse are these.

1. *That Gods Church is his house.*
2. *That this house of his, will need purging, it will gather soyle.*
3. *When God sees the exigent of it (that it must be so) he will be sure to visite, and judge his own house.*
4. *That there is a certain time when he will doe it, which those that are wise may easily gather; for God comes not upon his Church on the suddain, as a storm, or tempest, &c. but he gives them fair warning; there is a season when God begins judgement with his own house.*

- 5 Lastly, *Why God begins with his own Church and people.*

Of these in order.

Obser. 1.
That the
Church of
God is his own
house.

First, *The Church of God, is Gods house*; God hath two houses, the *Heavens* which are called his house, because he manifests his *glory* there, and the Church here below, wherein he manifests his *grace*; yea the whole world (in a sort) is his *house*, because he manifests his *power and wisdom* in it; but *Heaven* and his *Church* in a more particular manner, and that in these respects:

Reason
1

First, because God by his grace hath *residence* in his Church.

Second-

Secondly, because by the meanes of salvation, the *Word*, and *sacraments* there administred, he doth feed his Church, as in a house. 2

Thirdly, a man rests and takes contentment in his house, so God takes his best contentment in his Church and people, they are the most beloved of all mankind. 3

Fourthly, as in a house we use to lay up our jewels and precious things, so God layes up in his Church whatsoever is precious, his prayers, his graces, yea, whatsoever is good, & of high esteem, that he bestows upon his Church and people. 4

For the further clearing of this, we must know that the Church and children of God are said to be his house, either

1. As a family is said to be a house, or
2. As the fabrick or building is said to be the house.

For the first, a man provides for his family you know, (and he that neglects it, is worse than an Infidell) even so doth God provide for his Church; the very *Dragons* and *Ostriges*, the worst of the creatures, all have some respect to their young ones, much more will God provide for his own; And as a man protects his house from all enemies, so will God protect his Church and people, and be a wall of fire, and a defence round about them.

God provides for his Church as his own house.

Now there is a mixture in the Church (as in a house) of good and bad vessels; but the godly are especially Gods house, as for hypocrites and false professors, they are no more in the house, then the excrements are in the body; they are in the body, but not of the body, and therefore as *Ishmael* they must be cast out at length.

And as in every house or building, there are some open places, and some private closets, &c. So is it here; God hath his private chamber, and his retiring place, (which is) the heart of every true Christian; He counts it not sufficient to dwell in his house at large, but he will dwell in the best part of it, the heart, and the affections, therefore he knocks at the dores of our hearts for entrance, and his best children are glad he will reside in them; they set him up in the highest place of their soules, and set a Crowne upon him; their desire is, that God may governe and rule their whole conversation; they have no Idoll above God in their hearts.

The heart of true Christians is Gods private closet.

Revel. 3. 20.

What a wonderfull mercy is this, that we are Gods house, that he will vouchsafe to dwell and take up his lodging in such defiled houses as our soules are; It is no mean favour, that God should single out us poore wretches, to have his residence and abiding place in our soules, considering there is so much wickednesse in the hearts of the best of us.

Use 1.

Oh, what comfort ariseth to a Christian soul from the due meditation of this point; If we are Gods house, then God will be our house; Then art our habitation (saith *Moses*) from generation to generation; How soever we shuffle in the world, as they did in the wilderness, now here, and now there, having no certain place of abode, but are here to day, and gone to morrow, yet in God we have an house, thou art our habitation;

Psalme 90. 1.

tation; he is ours, and we are his. And what a comfort is this, that we are Gods house; Certainly God will provide for his *owne house*; he that layes this charge upon others, and hath put that affection and care of *provision* into others for their *families*, will he neglect his own? he that makes us love, and puts that naturall affection in our hearts towards those that belong unto us, hath he not infinitely more in himself, when as that which we have, is but a beam or ray from his infinite brightnesse?

Use 2. This should then instruct us to labour that God may dwell largely and comfortably in us, to deliver up all to this keeper of our house, and suffer him to rule and raigne in us. The *Romish* Church is become the habitation of *Devils*, that which was *Bethel*, is now become *Beth-aven*. Why? because they would not suffer God to rule in his owne house, but would have coadjutors with Christ, as if he were not a sufficient *head* of the *Church* to governe it, but he must have a *Vicar* the *Pope*, who (as if *Christ* were too weak) will not suffer him to exercise his *Kingly office*, unlesse he may support and help him: thus they set up the abomination of desolation in the temple of God.

It much concernes us therefore to cleanse and purifie our hearts, that so we may entertaine Christ, and he may delight to abide and dwell with us: you know how hainously he took it, when *his house was made* Luke 19. 46. *a den of theeves*, and will he not take it much worse, that our hearts should be made the very sinkes and cages of all manner of uncleannesse?

How should we begge and cry to God that he would whip out these noysome lusts and corruptions out of the temple of our hearts, by any sharpe correction, or terrour of conscience whatsoever, rather than suffer them to reside there still, to grieve his good *spirit*. We should take a holy *State* upon us, as being *Temples of the holy Ghost*, and therefore too good to be defiled with sin: Our hearts should be as the *Holy of Holies*: And therefore the Apostle exhorts us to *abstaine from all filthinesse both of flesh and spirit*, for this cause, that God may dwell amongst us, for, *What communion hath light with darknesse?* 2 Cor. 7. 1. 2 Cor. 6. 14.

Use 3. Are Gods people his house? Then let the enemies of the Church take heed how they deale with *them*: for God will have a speciall care of his owne house: howsoever he may seem for a time to neglect his Children, yet remember this, they are his house still; and no ordinary house, but a *Temple*, whereon *sacrifice* is offered to him continually, and *be that destroyeth the Temple of God, him will God destroy.* 1 Cor. 3. 17.

Quest. Here a question would be answered, which some uncharitable spirits make, and that is this, Whether *England* be the house of God, or no?

Answ. I answer. The whole Catholike militant Church is but one house of God, though there be divers *branches* of the same; As there is but one maine *Ocean* of the *Sea*, yet as it washeth upon the *Brittish coast*, it is called the *Brittish Sea*; and as it washeth on the Germans, the German Sea, &c. It hath divers names of the divers Countries which it passeth thorow: neverthelesse there is still but one maine *Sea*: So it is with

Answ.
That the
Church of
England is
Gods house.

with the house of God; God hath but one true Church in the whole world, which spreads it selfe into divers *Nations* and *Countries* upon the face of the earth; One branch whereof is among us at this day.

How prove you that?

Quest.

Doth not Christ dwell among us by his *Ordinances*, and by his *Spirit* working effectually in the same? If a house be not in *perfect repaire*, is it not still a house? I beseech you let us rather give God cause to delight to *dwell still* with us, than call in question whether he dwelleth amongst us or no.

Answ.

But to proceed. Hence further we see, that the house of God after some time will need visiting and purging, seeing it will soone gather soyle. There will abuses and disorders creepe into it, so that it will need *Reformation*. And this the Apostle seemes to insinuate, when he saith, *The time is come that judgement must begin at the house of God.* The Lord saw cause for what he did: For,

Obser. 2.
That the house of God needs visiting and purging, and the reasons of it.

First, such is the weaknesse of mans nature, that *evil* things soone discourage us, and *good* things (except we wraastle with our spirits) prove a snare to the best; Even the Church of God after a long time of peace is apt to gather corruption, as *water* doth by standing, and as the ayre it selfe will doe, if it have not the *winde* to purge it; And as it is in the bodies of men, if they be not curiously looked unto, (after a certaine time) they will gather such a burthen of humors as will rise to a distemper, so that they must be let bloud, or purged, &c. So it is with the Church of God; Such is the infirmity of mans nature, and the malice of *Satan* that enemy to mankinde, that the best of Gods people will quickly gather some distemper or other, and stand in need of purging. You know a house will gather dust of it self, though cleane at the first.

Reason 1.

2. Most certaine it is that the Church of God cannot be long without some affliction, considering that it is now in a state of Pilgrimage, absent from God, in another world as it were; We live in a grosse corrupt ayre, and draw in the corruption of the times, one defiling another, *I am a man of polluted lips* (saith *Esay*) and *dwell with men of polluted lips*; ill neighbours made him the worse.

Reason 2.

Esay 6. 5.

This should stirre us up to lament the miserable estate of *mans nature*, that even the best of men (the Church and people of God) whilst they remaine in this world, stand in need of continuall purging and winnowing. Crosses are as necessary to us as our daily bread; because we carry that about us which wants them; We are as much beholding to Gods *corrections*, as to his *comforts* in this world; the Church needs keeping under for the most part; God will not have us settle upon our dregs. This should teach us to bewaile our condition, and to desire to be at home, where we shall need no purging, where we shall be as free from *sorrow*, as from *sinne* the cause of it.

Vs.

*Psal. 55. 19.
Jer. 48. 11.*

Observe we further, that as the Church will stand in need of chastisements, so God will come and visite his Temple when need is; and but when need requires neither; for God is no Tyrant, yet he will shew that he

Obser. 3.
That God will come to visite & purge his house, when need is.

hates

Amos 3. 2. hates sin, wheresoever he finds it ; even in his own dear children and servants.

If God should beare with the abuses and finnes of his owne Church and people, it would seeme that sinne was not so contrary to his holy disposition as it is. Therefore in whomsoever he findes sinne, he will punish it : Our blessed Saviour found this true, when he tooke upon him the imputation of our finnes, and became but only a Surety for us; you see how it made him cry out, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me !* Those glorious Creatures, the very Angels themselves, when they kept not their own standing, God would indure them no longer, but thrust them out of heaven.

Object.

But why doth God chiefly afflict his owne people more than others?

Answer.

Why God afflicts his own people before others.
Ezech. 4. 6.
Levit. 10. 3.

Because they are of his owne family, and are called by his name : Now the disorders of the family tend to the disgrace of the Governour of it : the finnes of the Church touch God more nearely than others. And therefore judgements must begin at the Sanctuary first. *I will be sanctified in all that come near me,* saith God, when he smote Aarons Sonnes. The nearer we come to God, (if we maintain not the dignity of our profession) undoubtedly the more neare will God come to us in Judgement. We see the Angels, who came nearest to God of all others, when once they sinned against him, they were tumbled out of heaven, and cast into the bottomlesse pit : Heaven could then brooke them no longer.

2

Beloved, the Gospell suffers much through the sides of professors : What saith the wicked worldling ? These be your professors : see what manner of lives they lead ; what little conscience they make of their wayes, &c. Little do men know how much Religion is vilified, and the *wares of God* evill spoken of, through the loose carriage of Professors of the Gospell, as if there were no force in the grace and favour of God to make us love and obey him in all things ; as if Religion consisted in word onely, and not in power. What a scandall is this to the cause of Christ ? It is no marvell God begins with them first. *You have I knowne above all the families of the earth, and therefore will I punish you.* A man may see and passe by dirt in his grounds, but he will not suffer it in his dining Chamber, he will not endure dust to be in his Parlour.

Amos 3. 2.

3
The finnes of the godly more harmful than others.

The finnes of Gods house admit of a greater aggravation, then the sins of others : For, 1. They are committed against more light ; 2. against more benefits and favours ; 3. their sins in a manner are sacrilege ; what, to make the Temple of God a den of thieves ; to defile their bodies and souls that are bought with the precious blood of Jesus Christ ; Is this a small matter ? Again, 4. their sins are Idolatry ; for they are not only the house of God, but the spouse of God.

Now for a spouse to be false and adulterous, this is greater than fornication, because the bond is nearer ; So the nearer any come to God in profession, the higher is the aggravation of their sinne ; and as their sinne

sinne grows ; so must their punishment grow answerable, and proportionable: They therefore that know Gods will most of all others, must look for most stripes if they doe it not.

Hence therefore learne that no Priviledge can exempt us from Gods judgements, nay rather the contrary; where God doth magnifie his rich goodnesse and mercy to a people, and is notwithstanding dishonoured by them, he will at last magnifie his righteous justice in correcting such disobedient wretches. Some of the Fathers were forced to justifie God in visiting his Church more sharply then other people : because Christians are so much worse than others, by how much they should be better. Their sins open the mouths of others to blaspheme. We should not beare out our selves on this, that we are Gods house, but fear so much the more to offend Him, else all our priviledges will but increafe our guilt, not our comfort.

Secondly, if God begins with his own house, let the Church be severe in punishing sin there most of all, because Gods wrath will break out first there. What a shame is it, that the Heathen should make such sharplaws against Adulterey and other sins, and we let them passe with a slight, or no punishment at all? No doubt but God blesteth a State most, when sin is discountenanced and condemned most ; for then it is the States sin no longer, but lyeth upon particular offenders.

But I hasten.

As God will visit his Church, so there is a certain time for it. God as he hath appointed a generall day to judge the world in, so he appoints particular times of judgement in this life, he is the wise dispenser of seasons. God doth not alwaies whip his Church, but his ordinary course is, to give them some respite, as Acts 9. after Pauls conversion the Church had joy, and grew in the comforts of the holy Ghost. God hath rejoycing dayes for his people, as well as mourning dayes ; faire weather, as well as foule, and all to help them forward in the way to Heaven. Beloved, God gives his babes, and weak ones many happy and blessed times to encourage them at their first coming on, that they may the better grow up in goodnesse, and not be nipped in the bud; but after a certaine time, when through peace and encouragement they grow secure and carelesse, and scandalous in their lives, then he takes them in hand and corrects them. God hath scouring dayes for his vessels.

What be those times wherein God will visit his Church ?

I answer in generall, the time of visiting the Church of God is from Abel to the last man that shall be in the earth ; the Church began with blood, continues with blood, and shall end with blood; the whole dayes of the Church, are a time of persecution ; from my youth upward (saith the Psalmist) I have suffered ; so may the Church of God say, even from my cradle, from my infancy, I have been afflicted ; yea for thy sake we are killed all the day long, and counted as Sheep for the slaughter but this is not here meant.

The time for the Church of God to suffer, is, when the glorious manifestation of the Gospel is more than in former times ; we see

Use 1.

No priviledge can exempt us from Gods judgements. Augustine. Salvation.

Use 2.

Obser. 4. God appoints a particular time for his visitation.

Quest.

Ans.

I

What be the times of God, visitation. Psal. 88. 15. Psal. 44. 22.

2

The Church is afflicted when the light of the Gospel hath most clearly shined.

the ten first *persecutions* was after that generall *ipremulgation* of the Gospel, whereby the world was more inlightned than formerly. We read in the *Revelation*, of a *White horse* that Christ rides on, and a *pale horse* of famine, and a *red horse* of persecution that followed after him; So presently after the preaching of the Gospel, comes the Fanne, and the Axe, (or though not very presently, yet) after a certaine time, when our need requires it; for God will wait a while to see how we entertain his glorious *Gospell*, and whether we walke worthy of it or not.

3
That now is
the time of
the Churches
affliction.

Quest.

Ans.
How we may
know when
some judg-
ment approa-
cheth.

1. Signe.
Amos 4. 6, 7.

Esay 1. 5.

More particularly, even now is the time of *Jacobs trouble*, even now God hath put a cup into the Churches hand, and it must go round; the sword hath a commission to devoure, which is not yet called in.

But what be the more especial times wherein a man may know some judgement is like to fall upon the Church of God?

The Scripture is wondrous full in the point.

1. God usually before any heavie judgement visits a people with lesser judgements; his foot-steps *first* appeare in some small token of his displeasure, but if that prevails not, *then* he brings a greater; *this*, and *this have I done*, (saith the Lord) and yet ye have not returned unto me; There be droppings before the ruine of a house; Lesser judgements make way for greater, as a little wedge makes way for a greater, and therefore where lesse afflictions prevail not, there cannot but be an expectation of greater, *Why should I smite you any more* (saith God) *you fall away more and more*, (that is) I must have a sweeping judgement to carry you cleane away.

2. Signe.
Esay 3. 2, 3.

Pro. 11. 10, 11.
Eccles. 9. 15.

Again, usually before some great calamity, God takes away worthy men, *the Councellour*, and *the Captain*, and *the man of Warre*. This is a tearfull preface that God threatneth some destruction; for they are the *Pillars* of the Church, and the strength of the world; they are those that make the times and places good wherein they live; for they keep away *evill* and doe good, by their *example*, and by their *prayers* many ways. A good man is a common good; *the City thrives the better* (as *Solomon* saith) *for a righteous man*; therefore we have cause to rejoyce in them, and it is an evill signe when such are removed.

3. Signe.

God usually visits a people, when some *horrible crying sins* raigne amongst them; as first *Atheisme*. Beloved, God stands upon his prerogative *then*, when he is scarce known in the world; when they say, Where is God? God sees us not, &c. So likewise, secondly, when *Idolatry* prevails, this is spirituall *adultery*, and a breach of *Covenant* with God. Again thirdly, when *divisions* grow amongst a people, *Union* is a preserver; where there is dissention of judgement, there will soon be dissention of *affections*; and dissipation will be the end if we take not heed; for the most part *Ecclesiasticall* dissentions, end in *Civill*; And therefore we see before the destruction of *Jerusalem* what a world of *Schismes* and *Divisions* were amongst the *Jewes*, there were *Pharisees*, and *Sadduces*, &c. It was the ruine of the *ten Tribes* at length, the rent that *Jeroboam* caused in Religion; It is a fearefull signe of some great Judgement to fall upon a Church, when

when there is not a *stopping* of *dissentions*; they may be easily stopped at the *first*, as *waters* in the beginnings, but when they are once gotten into the very *vitall parts* of the Church and *Common-wealth*, we may see the mischief, but it is hardly remedied. Again, when *sin* goes with some 4. *Signs*. evil *circumstances* and odious *qualities*, which aggravate the same in the sight of God; as when *sin* grows ripe, & abounds in a Land or Nation: at such a time as this a man may know there is some fearfull judgement approaching.

But when is *sin* ripe?

Quest.

1. When it is *impudent*; when men grow bold in *sin*, making it their whole course and trade of life; when mens wicked *courses* are their *conversation*, they cannot tell how to doe otherwise. *Ans.* When *sin* is ripe.

2. When *sin* grows *common*, and spreads far; It is an ill plea to say; Others doe so as well as I; alas, the more *sin*, the more danger.

3. When there is a *security* in sinning, without *fear* or dread of the *Almighty*, as if men would dare the God of Heaven to doe his worst; Oh beloved, such persons as go on stil in their sins to provoke the Lord, do put a sword (as it were) into Gods hands to destroy themselves.

The *old world* (you know) was very *secure*; no doubt they mocked at holy *Noah*; when he made the *Ark*, as if he had been a doting old man; notwithstanding he foretold them of the wrath to come; And our Saviour *Christ* saith, Before the end of the world it shall be, as in the *dayes of Noah*; Beloved, God hath his *old worlds* still; If we have the same course and security of sinning, we must look for the same Judgements. And therefore compare *times* with *times*; If the times now answer former times, when God judged them, we may well expect the same fearefull judgments to fall upon us.

Unfruitfulness threatneth a judgement upon a people; when God hath bestowed a great deal of *cost* and time, he looks we should answer his expectation in some measure, The *Fig-tree* in the Gospell, had some respite given it, by reason of the *prayers* of the *Vine-dresser*, but afterward when it brought forth *no fruit*, it was cut down and cast into the fire. Beloved, who amongst us would indure a barren tree in his Garden? That which is not fit for fruit, is most fit for fire; we can indure a barren tree in the *Wilderness*, but not in our *Orchards*; when God, the great *Husband-man* of his Church, sees that upon so great and continuall cost bestowed upon us, we remain yet *unfruitfull*, he will not suffer us long to cumber the ground of his Church. 5. *Signs*.

Again, *decay* in our *first love* is a signe of judgement approaching; 6. *Signs*. God threatned the Church of *Ephesus* to remove his *Candlestick* from among them, for their *decay* in their *first love*; that having surfeited of plenty and peace; he might recover her *tast* by dyeting of her; *decay* in *love* proceeds from *dis-esteem* in judgement; and God cannot endure his glorious Gospel should be slighted, as not deserving the richest strein of our *love*; the Lord takes it better, where there is but little strength, & a striving to be better, than when there is great means of grace & knowledge, & no growth answerable, but rather a declining in goodness. I be-

I beseech you lay these things to heart; The Lord is much displeased, when Christians are not so *Zealous* as they should be; when there is not that *sweet communion of Saints* among them, to strengthen and encourage one another in the wayes of holinesse as there might be; when there is not a *beauty* in their *profession* to allure and draw on others to a love and liking of the best things; when there is not a care to avoide all *scandalls* that may weaken *respect* to good things, and bring an evill report on the wayes of God; when they labour not with their whole hearts to serve the Lord in a chearfull manner, &c. The very not serving God answerable to *encouragements*, is a certaine signe of ensuing danger.

Deut. 28. 47.

Use.

Jerem. 8. 7.

Therefore I beseech you let us look about us, whether these be not the times wherein we live, that *judgement* must begin at the house of God. The Lord complains in *Jeremy* that the *Turtle* and other silly creatures knew the time of their standing, and removing, but *his people* did not know his *judgements*. Do the creatures know their times and seasons, and shall Christ complain that we *know not* the day of our *visitation*? what a shame is this? I beseech you let us know and consider our *times*; If we have a time of *sinning*, God will have a time of *punishing*.

And have we not just cause to feare that *judgement* is not farre from us, when we see a great part of *Gods house* on fire already, in our neighbouring Countries? we have had *lesser judgements*, and they have not wrought kindly with us; we need a stronger *purge*; If we look to the carriage of men, what *sin* is lesse committed now than formerly? How few *renew* their *covenant* with God in sincerity of Resolution) to walk closely with him.

And what the *judgement* will be, we may probably foresee; for usually the *last judgement* is the *worst*; we have had all but (*warre*) the worst of all; for in other judgements, we have to deal with God, but in *this*, we are to deale with *men*, whose very mercies are *cruelties*. The *sword* hath a long time been shaken over our heads, a cloud of *war* hath hung over us to affright us, but we rest stil secure in our sinful courses, and think *to morrow shall be as to day*, and that *no evill shall come nigh us*, &c. Oh the frozen hearts of Christians, that thrust the evill day farre from them; do we not see the whole world (in a manner) in a combustion round about us, and we (as *the three young men in the fiery furnace*) untouched? Beloved, we have out-stripped them abominable wickednesses; and how-ever the Lord is pleased, that we should *only* hear a noise and rumour of *war*, yet we in this Land have deserved to drink as deep of the cup of the Lords wrath, as any people under heaven.

Dan. 3.

Quest.

What course should we take to prevent the Judgement of God, and keep it from us?

Answ.

Of the means
to prevent &
escape Gods
judgements.

1. *Meanes*.
To meet God
by speedy re-
pentance.

Labour to meet God by speedy *repentance* before any decree be peremptorily come forth against us; As yet there is hope to prevaile; For (blessed be God) as we have many things to feare, so we have many things to *encourage* us to go unto God with *comfort*; we have enjoyed a succession of gracious *Princes* that have maintained the truth of God amongst us; we have many godly *Magistrates* and

and *Ministers*; together with the *Ordinances* and many other experiences of Gods love vouchsafed unto us. We have yet time to seeke the Lord, let us not *deferre* till the very time of *judgement* come upon us; for that is but selfe-love; Assure thy selfe thus much, thou canst have no more comfort in *troubles* and *afflictions* when they *doe* come, than thou hast care to prevent them *before* they come; answerable to our care in *preventing* now, will be our comfort then.

Therefore if we would be hid in the day of Gods wrath; if we would have God to set his *marke* upon us, and write us in his *Booke of Remembrance*, and to *gather us* when he *makes up his jewels*; If we would have him to own us then, looke to it now; Get now into Christ, he provided now of a sound *profession of Religion*, and that will be as an *Arke* to shelter us in the *evill* day; What we know let us *do*, and then we shall be built on a *Rock*, that if waves or any thing come, we shall *not* be stirred.

Usually God in dangerous times leaveth some *ground of hope* which worketh differently with men; Such as are *carnall* grow *presumptuous* hereupon; but the *Godly* are drawne *nearer to God*, upon any appearance of *incouragement* (the good things they enjoy from God, work in them a more earnest desire to please him.

It is the custome of the Spirit of God, to make *doubtfull*, *imperfect*, and (as it were) half *promises* to keep his people still under some *hope*; whence we read of these and such like phrases in Scripture, *It may be God will shew mercy*, and *Who knoweth whether he will heare us*, &c.

Again, examine and try upon what ground thou *professest Religion*, whether it will hold water or no, and stand thee in *stead* when *evill* times shall come, Beloved, it nearly concerns us all, seriously to consider, and narrowly to search upon what grounds we venture our lives and souls; try our *graces*, our *knowledge*, *repentance*, *faith*, *love*, &c. of what mettall they are; those that have *coyn* bring it to the *touchstone*, & if it prove counterfeit, they presently reject it, & will have none of it; Oh that we had this wisdom for matters of *eternity*! If men would search and plough up their *own* hearts, they would not need the plowing of Gods *enemies*; we should not need Gods judgements, if we would judge *our selves*; The Church complained that the enemies had made *long furrows* on her back, but if she had plowed *her self* she had sowed the enemies that labour.

Before any judgement comes, let us store up the fruits of a *holy life*; every day be doing something; do that *now* which may comfort thee *then*; store up comforts against the evil day; when the night *is* come we cannot *worke*; let us therefore *walk* while we have the *light*; let us look about us, and *doe what good* we can, whilest we *have time*, as the Apostle saith, The time will come ere long, that thou wilt wish, Oh that I had that opportunity and advantage of *doing good* as I have had! Oh that I had such means of doing good as I have had! but then it will be too late; then that whereby thou shouldst

Note. do bet

Mal. 3. 16.

2. *Meanes.*
To examine
the grounds
of our Religion.

Psal. 129. 3.

3. *Meanes.*
To store up
the fruits of a
godly life before
the judgement cometh.

do good, will be in thy enemies hands; and therefore while we have time, let us be *doing* and *receiving* all the good we can.

4. *Meanes.*

To mourn for our own sins, and the sins of the times.

Again, if we would have God to shield us, and be an hiding place to us in the worst times, *let us mourn for our own sins, and the sins of the times wherein we live.* Let us keep our selves unspotted of the sins of the world; let us not bring sticks to the *common* fire; let us not make the times *worse* for us, but *better*; that the times and places we live in may *blesse* God for us.

And let us not only mourn for the *sins* of the times, but labour also to *repreſſe* them all we can, and *stand in the gap*, endeavouring by our *prayers* and *teares* to stop Gods judgements.

5. *Meanes.*

To set an high price on our Religion, and every truth of it.

And we should set a high price upon that *Religion* and the blessings of God which we doe enjoy, lest we force God to take them from us; and so we come to know that by the want of it, which we did not *value* when we possessed it; Oh let us esteem the *treasure* of the Gospel at a higher rate than ever we have done; we see how it is slighted by most of the world, how they shake the blessed *truths* of God, and call them into question, being indifferent for any Religion; Is this our proficiency beloved? It behoves us to store up all the sanctified knowledge we can, and to take heed we yeeld not to any that would either weaken our *judgement* in Religion, or our *affections* to the best things; we should every one in his place labour to *stop* dissentions in this kinde, and knit our hearts together as *one man* in unity and concord; *ſactions* have alwayes *ſactions* going with them; *unity* makes strong, but *division* weakneth any people; Even Satans kingdome, *divided against it self*, cannot stand.

What is the glory of *England*? take away the Gospel, and what have we that other Nations have not better than our selves? Alas, if we labour not to maintaine *truth*, we may say with *Elies* daughter, *The glory of God is departed from us.*

2 Sam. 4. 22.

Sarah had her *handmaids*; and so hath *Religion* been attended with *prosperity* and *peace*, *preservation*, and *protection* amongst us, even to the admiration of other Countries. Shall we not therefore make much of that *Religion*, which if we had it *alone* (joynd with many crosses and *sufferings* yet) were an inestimable and unvaluable blessing? And shall we not *now* much more, considering it hath been attended by God with so many *mercies*, cherish and maintaine the same all we can? Do we think it will go alone when it goes, whensoever God removes it from us? No no, therefore I beseech you let us highly esteeme of the *Gospel*, whilst we do enjoy it; if we suffer *that* to be shaken any way, our peace and prosperity will *then* leave us, and judgement upon judgement will come upon us: If we will not regard the *truth* of God which he esteemeth most, he will take away *outward* prosperity which we esteeme most.

Obſer. 5.

That judgement must begin at Gods house, and the reasons of it.

But I come to the fifth point, *That judgement must begin at the house of God.*

Why doth God *begin* with his own Church and people?

Quæſt.

Anſw.

1. Usually, because he useth wicked men and the *enemies* of his Church for that base service to correct and punish them.

2. To

2. To take away all excuse from wicked men, that they seeing how severely God deales with his own deare Children, might be stirred up to look about them, and consider what will become of themselves at the last, if they go on in their sinfull courses; so many croses as befall Gods children so many evidences against secure carnall persons; for if God deal thus with the *green tree*, what will he doe with the *dry*? If he scourge his *children* thus with *rods*, certainly the *slaves* shall be whipped with *Scorpions*.

Reason 2.

3. God begins with his own servants, that his children might be best at last; if he should not begin with them, they would grow deeper in rebellion against him, and attract more soyle and filth to themselves, and be more and more ingaged to error and corruption; Gods love to his people is such, that he regards their correction before the confusion of his enemies.

Reason 3.

Again, God doth this, that when he sends them good dayes afterwards, they might have the more taste and relish of his goodnesse; after an afflicted life, we are more sensible of happy times; God deales favourably therefore with a man, when he crosseth him in the beginning of his dayes, and gives him peace in his latter end.

Reason 4.

This is a point of marvelous comfort & incouragement to the faithfull servants of God; for first, though God correct them sharply, yet he shews thereby they are of his household; When a man corrects another, we may know it is his *child* or *servant*, &c. God shews that we are of his *house* and *family* by the care he takes to correct us; the *Vine* is not hated because it is *pruned*, but that it may bring forth more *fruit*; the *ground* is not hated because it is *ploughed*, nor the *house* because it is *cleansed*. But what is meant by judgement here?

Vse 1.

That God by our corrections sheweth that we are his.

Judgement is correction moderated to Gods children; judgement is twofold in Scripture; the *Statutes* of God are called *judgements*, and the *corrections* of God are called *judgements*: The *Statutes* are called *judgements*, because they judge what we should doe, and what we should not doe; Now when we do not that we should, he is forced to judge us actually with reall judgements.

Quest.

Answ.

What is meant by judgment, & the divers kinds of it.

The reall judgements of God, are either, 1. upon the *wicked* (and so they are judgements *in fury*, for there is not the least taste of his love in them to wicked men; they can make no sanctified use of them; because they are not directed to them for their good.) Or secondly, to *Gods children*, and so they are *moderate corrections*, and therefore the Prophet so often urgeth, *Correct us O Lord in judgement*, &c. God alwayes moderates afflictions to his own children, but as for the *wicked*, he sweeps them away as *dung*, as *drosse*, and as *chaffe*, &c.

Jer. 10. 24.

Again, it is a comfort to Gods children that he begins with them first; rather than God will suffer them to perish and be condemned with the world, he begins with them here, they have their worst first, and the better is to come.

Vse 2.

This likewise is some comfort, that the time when God corrects his children is most *seasonable* and fit for them, God *pruneth* his *trees* in the

Vse 3.

Micah 7.

the fittest time. A plant cut *unseasonably* dieth, but being cut in due time it flourishes the better; All the works of God are beautifull in their season. Every Christian may truly say, God loves me better than I do my selfe, he knows the best time of *purging* and *visiting* his people, *This is the time of Jacobs trouble*, &c. therefore we should lay our hands upon our mouths, kisse the rod, and stoop under judgements, as considering Gods *time*, to be the best time, and that he knows better what is good for us, than we doe our selves.

Securitatē
sua timor.
Spei exarscit
ad opus.

Jer. 32. 40.

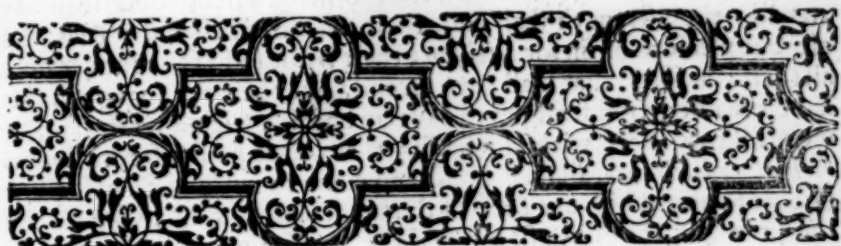
Thus you see though we have cause of fearing Gods judgements, yet there is something to comfort us in the midst of all. God mingles our *Comforts* and *crosses* together, whilest we are here; but to keep us in awe of offending his *Majesty*, and to *incourage* us in *well-doings*; Therefore let us alwaies look what manner of *fear*, and what manner of *hope* we have, for both these are operative *affections*; Oh that I could stir up this blessed feare in you, it is that which preserves the soule, and God hath promised *that he will put his feare into our hearts, that we shall not depart from him*. I beseech you ply the throne of grace, and desire the Lord that it may be to every one of your soules according to his good Word.

Prov. 1. 24. 26.

Labour likewise for *incouragement* in the wayes of holinesse; (blessed be God) yet we have a time of respite, God forbearēs us with much patience and goodnesse. Answerable to our good courses that we take *now*, will be our comfort in the *evill day*. If we carelesly goe on in sin, and think it time enough to renew our covenant with God *then* when his judgements are abroad, and readie to seise upon us, we do but delude our own soules, and expose our selves to invitable dangers. Mark what the Lord saith, *Because I called, and you would not hear, &c. therefore will I laugh at your destruction*; Is it not strange that the mercifull God should *laugh* at the *calamity* of his poor creatures? yet thus it is with every wilfull sinner, that dallies with God, and puts off his repentance from time to time; God will take pleasure in the ruine of such a man, *and laugh when his fear cometh*; because those that seeke him then, do it not out of any love or liking of God and the wayes of goodnesse, but meerly out of selfe-love and respect to their own welfare.

F I N I S.

THE



THE UNGODLIES MISERY.

SERM. XIII.

1 PET. 4. 17, 18, 19.

And if it first begin at us, what shall the end of those be that obey not the Gospel?



Hese words are propounded by way of *admiration*, as if the Apostle had been at his wits end, and could not certainly set downe, how great the judgement should be of those that obey not the Gospel; it was so terrible and unavoidable. The points considerable are these.

1. *That the seeming prosperity of the wicked shall have an end.* Three points considerable.
2. *That it is wisdom to consider the end of gracelesse persons.*
3. *The description of them in these words, They are such as obey not the Gospel.*

It is naturally in the hearts of carnall persons, to thinke it shall be alwayes wel with them, where as the Prophet saith, the happinesse of a wicked man, is but *as a Candle, that ends in a snuffe, or like a Rose the beauty*

The seeming prosperity of the wicked shall have an end.

beauty whereof suddainly fades, and nothing remains but the *prickles*, The favours of men, (for which they so much offend God) shall have an end; their strength shall end, their pleasure shall end: Alas, they are but pleasure of sin for a *season*; their *life* it self (the foundation of all their comforts) that shall have an end; but their *sins*, by which they have offended God, shall never have an end: See what a fearfull judgement follows every wicked wretch; that which he sins for, his *honour*, *riches*, and *delights*, all shall vanish and come to nothing, they shall not be able to afford him one drop or dram of comfort at his dying day: but the sin it self, the guilt of that, and the punishment due to the same, shall indure for ever to torment his soule, without serious repentance and turning to God in time.

Obfer. 2.
The happines
of the wicked
is momentany,
their misery
endlesse.

But secondly, if the *happinesse* of wicked men shall have an end, and their *misery* shall have no end, let us not be dazeled with their present *happinesse*, so as to imitate their evil wayes: let us tremble at their *courses*, whose *ends* we tremble at; if we walke in the same path, shall we not come to the same end? All wicked men that delight in the company one of another *here*, are *brethren in evill*, and shall be like a company of *tares* all cast into Hell fire together hereafter: It is pittie they should be severed *then*, that will not be severed *now*; Those mens *courses* therefore which we follow here, of their judgement we shall participate eternally afterwards.

Ysa.
Plal. 37.
Luke 16,

Luke 16.

Let this admonish us to have nothing to doe with sinfull persons, nor to be troubled with their seeming prosperity; They stand in *slipery places*; God lets them alone for a while, but their pleasure will end in bitterness at last; all their riches shall end in poverty and beggery, They shall not have a drop of water to coole their tongues; All their honour & greatnesse shall end in confusion and shame, and lie in the dust ere long. Indeed we should rather pittie them if we consider their latter *ends*. Alas what shall become of them ere long? The fall of these wretches shall be so terrible, that *Peter* could not let it down, but leaves it to the admiration of the reader, *What shall the end of such be!* &c.

One difference betwixt a *wise man* and a *fool*, is, that a wise man considers his end, and frames his life sutable thereunto; therefore if we would be truly wise, let us consider the end of those things in this world, which wicked men offend God for, and set so light by Heaven and everlasting happinesse for the procurement of; Alas, whatsoever is here, shall have an end. A Christian should frame his course answerable to eternity, that when his happinesse shall end in this world, it may begin in the world to come; else we may out-live our happinesse. And our present happinesse aggravates future and eternall misery.

This is the misery of wicked men, that their soules are eternall, but their happinesse is determined in this life, here that ends; but their misery is infinite, and hath no end at all. Looke what degree of excellency any creature hath if it be *good*, the same degree of misery it hath, if it be *evill*; What made the *Angels* worse than other creatures when they sinned? but onely this, they were most excellent creatures, and there-

therefore when they became evil, their excellency did but help them to subsist and be more capable of punishment. A wise man understandeth his misery; Now the *Angels* when they fell, became more miserable, because they were more capacious, and sensible of it, being *Spirits*. *Sapiens miser plus miser.*

So *man* being sinfull and evill, his end will be more miserable than any inferiour creature, because he was more happie; his happinesse helps him to more misery; How should this stir up every one to look about him, and not to prize himself by any outward excellency whatsoever? The more excellent thou art, the more miserable, if thou sin against God; It is of all unhappinesse the most unhappy thing for a man to live happily here a while, and be eternally miserable afterwards; for our former happinesse tends to nothing else but to make us more sensible of future miseries. What is all the felicity of great persons when they die and leave this world? alas, it soone comes to nothing, and serves but to make them apprehensive of more misery than meaner persons are capable of; *What shall the end of such be!* &c.

From this, that the Apostle leaves the punishment of all sinfull wretches, to admiration and wonderment, rather than to expression, (for indeed it is above expression) we may learn, when we are tempted to any sin or unlawfull course, to consider thus with our selves; Shall I for a pleasure that will end, have a judgement that shall never end? For the favour of men that will faile, shall I lose the perpetuall favour of God, whose wrath is a *consuming fire*, and burnes to hell? Shall I for a little profit, lose my soul eternally? Beloved, as the good things of a Christian (even in this life) are *admirable* beyond expression, *peace that passeth all understanding, & joy unspeakable, & glorious*, &c. so when God awakens our consciences, those gripes & pangs, & terrors of soul which follow after sin committed, are unutterable and unconceiveable. I beseech you therefore when ever you are solicited to sin for *profit* or *pleasure*, &c. set before your eyes the fading and perishing condition of these things, and the everlastingness of that judgement which attends upon them. Oh that we were wise, this way.

I come now to the third particular: *Those that obey not the Gospel*; wherein we have

1. A description of the *thing*.

2. And then of the *persons*.

The *thing* is the *Gospel of God*; the *persons* are *wicked men*; God is the Author of the Gospel, it comes out of his breast, sealed with authority. Whence learn this (by the way,) *That in refusing the blessed Gospel, we have to deale with God himselfe*; It is Gods Word and Gospel, therefore when you reject it, you reject God; in receiving it, you receive God, you deal with God himselfe when you deale with the Ministers of his Word; therefore when ever you partake of the *Ordinances*, say with good *Cornelius*, *We are now in the presence of God to hear what he wil say*.

But, what is it *to obey the Gospel*?

Quest.

Answ.
What is it to
obey the Go-
spel.

To obey the Gospell is to *entertaine the offers of it*; for indeed though the Gospell *command* us to *beleeve* in the *Son of God*, yet withall it offers the very command unto us; To *beleeve* in Christ, being in effect a command to *receive him*, which supposeth an act of giving and tendering something to us; Now when we do not receive and entertain with our whole heart Christ and his benefits freely offered, we disobey the Gospell, and so procure danger to our selves.

But more particularly, he *obeyes the Gospell*, that is sensible of his own miserable and sinfull condition, and from a sense thereof hungreth after the *grace* and favour offered in Jesus Christ to pardon sin, which when he hath once obtained, walks answerable to that great mercy received. He that receives *whole* Christ to *justifie* him, and *sanctifie* him too, that receives Christ as a *King* to rule him, as well as a *Priest* to save him, such a one receives the Gospell: but those that are not sensible of their misery, or if they be, will not goe to Christ, but as desperate persons sling away the potion that should cure them, these are far from obeying the Gospell of God.

Such likewise as pretend, Oh, Christ is welcome with the pardon of sinne, but yet live in grosse wickednesse against knowledge and conscience, and suffer him not to bear sway in their hearts, as if Christ came by *bloud* alone, and not by *water*, whereas indeed he came as well by *water* to sanctifie us, as by *bloud* to die for us.

Many there are that think they obey the Gospell, who are indeed very rebels and enemies unto it; they welcome the *Gospell*, and they hate *Popery*, &c. but notwithstanding they will be their own Rulers, & live as they list, they will not deny themselves in their beloved sins; they are full of *Revenge*, notwithstanding the *Gospell* saith, *This is my Commandement that ye love one another*. That *bids them deny ungodlinesse and worldly lusts, and live soberly*; yet they will riot, and follow their base courses still. The *Gospell* teacheth a man to acknowledge God in all his wayes, to deal with God in all things he goes about; now when a man lives without God in the world, saying, *God is merciful*, and *Christ is a Saviour*, and yet persists in those wayes which seem good in his own eyes, never looking to God to guid him, or his *law* to rule him, how can such a one be said to obey the Gospell?

That workes
have no place
in the act of
justification.

Gal. 3.

But some others there are amongst us, that regard not Christ and his satisfaction *alone*, but joyne *faith* and *workes* together in justification, they will have other Priests, and other intercessors than Christ. Alas beloved, how are these men false from Christ to another Gospell, as if Christ were not an all-sufficient Saviour, and able to deliver to the uttermost? What is the Gospell but salvation and redemption by Christ *alone*?

Therefore *Romes Church* is an *Apostate Church*, and may well be styled an *Adulteresse* and a *Whore*, because she is false from her *Husband* Christ Jesus.

And what may we think of those that would bring *light* & *darknes*, *Christ* and *Antichrist*, the *Ark* & *Dagon* together, that would reconcile us,

us, as if it were no such great matter? Beloved, they that joya works with Christ in matters of *justification*, erre in the foundation; the very life and soule of Religion consists in this. What was the reason the *Jewes* stumbled at this *stumbling block*, and were never benefited by Christ? why; they set up a righteousness of their *own* which could not stand, but soon falsed them. So when a man sets up a righteousness of his *own*, neglecting the righteousness of *Christ*, it is impossible he should ever be saved, living and dying in that error.

Philip. 3. 10.

Therefore I beseech you take heed of disobeying the Gospel of Jesus Christ in any kind whatsoever; for of all sins this is the greatest, as shall appeare by these reasons.

Why disobedience against the Gospel is so great a sin.

First, because sins against the Gospel are sins against those *Attributes* wherein God will glorifie himself most, as his *grace*, *mercy*, *loving kindness*, &c. Therefore the Gospel is called *grace*, because it publisheth, offers, and applies *grace*; Now sins against *mercy* are greater than sinnes against *justice*; for God hath made all things for the glory of his mercy. Even among men, are not sins against favours the greatest sins? To wrong a man whether he deserves well or ill, is an offence. But what man will have his courtesies rejected though never so mean? Love deserves love; Favour deserves respect again: But now when we *obey not the Gospel*, we neglect and despise the goodnesse and mercy of God; Oh what excellent blessings doth the Gospel reveale, if we had hearts to value them! Doth not the Gospel bring *salvation*? Is it not the word of *grace*, the word of *life*, the word of the *Kingdome*? Beloved, I beseech you lay these things to heart, for whensoever you refuse the Gospel of Christ, you refuse with it the word of *grace*, of the *Kingdom* of Heaven, and eternall life, and all; therefore the sins of the Gospel must needs be the greatest sins.

Reason 1.
Because sins against the Gospel are against those attributes in which God is most glorified.

Again, *sins against the greatest light are most sinfull*: What makes sin out of *measure sinfull*, but this, when it is committed against a great measure of light? What makes a man fall foule? It is not when he falls in a mist, or in a dark night, (every one will pittie him *then*, alas he wanted light) but when he falls at *noon day*. Beloved, had we lived in former times, when the *light* was not poured forth so abundantly as now it is, our sin had been the lesse, but now in this cleare Sunshine of the Gospel for us to live in sins condemned by so great a *light*, either in our judgement or practice, it must needs make our sin the greater. *If I had not come and spoke to them* (saith our Saviour) *they had had some pretence for their sins*; but when Christ had once spoken, all excuse was taken away, they could not *then* say, they knew not the will of God; and this is the reason of that speech of the Apostle, *Now you are in the light, walk as children of light*. And *This is the condemnation* that men hate light, (not that men for want of light stumble, but) *that men love darknes more than light*. It is not the sin it self, but the love and liking of sin which aggravates mens wickednesse, when as the malice and poyson of their hearts rebels against the discovery of Gods good pleasure in Christ.

Reason 2.
Because those sins are most sinfull which are against the greatest light.

John 15. 22.

Eph. 5. 8.
John. 3. 19.

Negative infidelity is a lesser sin than disobedience to the Gospel.

No people out of the Church are capable of this sin; for how can they

finne by *infidelity* and *unthankfulnesse* for the *Gospell*, that never had it? And therefore *Negative* infidelity is as it were no sin in comparison; If I
 John 15. 22. *had not come among them they had had no sin*, saith Christ. *Negative* I call that, when as men beleeve not, having no *meanes*, as *Infidels* and *Heathens*, &c. And therefore as they sin *without* the *Gospel*, so they shal be damned without the *Gospel*; the rule of their damnation shall be the law of *nature* written in their hearts; for this is an undoubted truth, *No man ever lived answerable to his Rule*, & therefore God hath just ground of damnation to any man, even from this, that he hath not lived answerable to the rule of his owne conscience; so that we need not fly to *reprobation*, &c.

Reason 3.
 Because they
 sin against a
 better cove-
 nant.

Again, another aggravation of sins against the *Gospel*, is, *that they are against the better covenant*; The first covenant was, *Doe this and live*, against which we all sinned, and *were under the curse*; But now we are under a more gracious covenant; (*a covenant of mercy*) Beleeve in the Lord Jesus Christ and we shall be saved; therefore sins now must needs be more hainous; for if we sin against the *Gospel*, either by *presumption*, or *despair*; by *profanenesse*, or *hypocrisie*, having a *form of godlinesse*, but *denying the power of it*; there is no remedy left for us: If a man sin against the *Law*, against *Morall* honesty and *Civill* righteousnesse, there is a remedy in the *Gospel* for him; but when a man sins against the sweet love and goodnesse of God, in rejecting the *Gospel* of his dear Son, Mercy it selfe shall not save such an one; That must needs be a strange sin that makes a man worse than a *Sodomite*; yet we reade, it *shall be easier for Sodom and Gomorrah in that day*, than for those that heare the *Gospel* (the blessed allurements and invitations to *beleeve*, and to leade an holy life answerable to our faith and calling) and live yet in sinnes against conscience, despising the precious blood of Christ.

Luke 3. 30.

Herod was a wretched man, yet notwithstanding it was said, he added this to all, *he put John in prison a Preacher of the Gospel*: sins against the *Gospel* in a loose malignant *Professor* are many times worse than all the rest. Oh therefore take heed of sinning against the favour and goodness of God, for this wil confound us at the day of judgment, when we shall think, What was so great a mercy offered me, and did I sleight it in this manner? Have I lost the *favour of God*, *eternal life*, and the glorious *company of the Saints in heaven*, for a base pleasure of sin for a season, to gratifie a brutish lust? Have I lost Christ & all the good by him for ever, only to satisfie my sinfull disposition? to please a carnall friend? &c. Oh how will this lie heavy upon the soul another day! we shal not need accusers, our own hearts shall justifie the sentence of God against us be it never so sharp, that we have refused mercy so often tendered to us in the blood of Christ. Mark what Saint Paul saith, *The Lord Jesus shal be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance upon those that know not God*, and obey not his Glorious *Gospel*; he saith not, only on those that are swearers, & profane persons, but ignorant sots *that care not to know God*, though they be not open sinners: He saith not, those that persecute the *Gospel*, or oppose it, shall be punished with eternall destruction from the presence

3 The 2. 7, 8.

presence of God, (which is true) but those that sin in a lesse degree, such as *obey not the Gospell*, that value not this inestimable *jewell*: that sell not all to buy this *pearl*; unto whom all the world is not *drosse & dung* in respect of the glorious Gospell of Christ Iesus; how shall they escape *which neglect so great salvation*?

Oh say some, this concernes not me, I thank God there is mercy in Christ, and I hope for pardon, &c. Beloved, here is the bane of mens souls, they will be their own Carvers, and take of the Gospell what they list; Oh so much of Christ as concernes their own good they will have, so much as concernes their pleasure and profit, so much as they may have and be proud to, and be devilish, and evill in their life and conversation to, this they allow of, and it is pittie he should live that regards not Christ in *justification*; but so much as concernes *mortification* and *self-deniall*, as crosses them in their sinfull courses, this they are strangers to; But (we must know) the Gospell doth not only *bring salvation*, but it teacheth a man *to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts*, to put off himselfe, his whole selfe, that he might have no judgement, nor no affection contrary to God. 2 Tim. 13.

To make this more plainly appeare, take these few instances.

The very lesson which the Gospell injoyneth, is *to cut off our right hand, and pull out our right eye*, (that is) to deny our selves in those sins which are most usefull and gainfull to us; now when this is pressed in particular to some that live in their secret beloved sins, presently they begin to hate this blessed truth, and the Ministry thereof; they know so much as wil damn them, but so much as without the which they cannot be saved, that they oppose; contenting themselves with a bare form and outside of Religion; they come to Church, & take their Books and read, and hear, and receive the Sacrament, &c. and in these outward performances they rest: Alas beloved what are these? I tell you, all the *priviledges* of the Gospell do but aggravate thy damnation, if thou art not bettered by them; for as they are in themselves invaluable *priviledges*, and even ravish the heart of a true child of God; so when they are not entertained to purpose, they make our sin the more hainous; Every man is willing to accept of Christ, but it must be upon their own terms; and what are those? So they may enjoy their worldly delights, so they may increase their estates by such unlawful means, and not be crossed; so long they are content that Christ and the Gospell shall be theirs; but otherwise if they cannot enjoy Christ upon their own termes, (that is) if they cannot goe to *Heaven* and to *Hell* to, they will rather regard their own profits and pleasures, than regard Christ. Oh, how do these poore wretches delude their own souls? beloved, the imbracing and obeying the Gospell is a spiritual marriage betwixt Christ and the beleever. Now you know in *Marriage* the will is given up to the *Husband* the wife is no more her own, but at his disposing: So when once we are truly united unto Christ, we take him for *better* for *worse*, we must suffer with him, yea *live & die* with him, & esteem him above all; we must take Christ upon his own terms, or else he will not be had; if we love not *him above Father & Mother* (yea & life it self) *we are not wor-* Mat. 10. 37.

of him; And therefore all that doe not thus obey the Gospel are rebels, and shall have the reward of rebels if they repent not in time. Were it not a comely thing (think you) for a company of *Traitors* that had this condition propounded to them, *If you will come in and live as good subjects, you shall have a pardon*, for them to go on presumptuously in their rebellion still, and think to have favour when they please, would not a sharp execution be the just desert of such persons?

2^d Instance.

1 Cor. 6. 9.

Luke 19. 27.

Again, Christ propounds pardon and forgiveness of sins upon this condition, that we will come in, and live as *wives* and as obedient *subjects* to his blessed *Spirit*, and not in *swearing*, *filthinesse*, and other abominable courses, of which the Scripture saith, *such shall never inherit the Kingdome of Heaven*; yet notwithstanding Sathan hath so bewitched many poor wretches, that think their case is good, & all shall go well with them, be their lives never so loose and opposite to the wayes of God; they blesse themselves when God doth not blesse them, but rather curse them to their faces; the Devil himself is likely to be saved as soon as such gracelesse persons as these, without repentance: No, no, if ever they expect a pardon, they must live as *subjects*: If they frame not themselves to be guided by Christ, and come under his government, to be ruled according to his will, they have nothing to do with mercy and salvation; *Those mine enemies that will not have me rule over them, bring them hither, and slay them before me, &c.* we mock Christ if we will not suffer him to rule us.

Object.
Answ.

But I cannot obey the *Gospell* of my selfe.

It is true, we cannot no more than we can obey the *Law*; nay, it is harder to obey the *Gospel* than to obey the law in a mans *own* strength; for there are the seeds of the Law in our nature; but there are none of the *Gospel*; that is meerly supernatural; the *promises* are above nature to apprehend them; therefore a supernaturall strength is required to plant the excellent grace of faith in our hearts. But though we be as unable to believe and obey the *Gospel* as the *Law*, yet here is the difference together with the unfolding of our miseries by the *Gospell*, the *Spirit of God* goes along to sustain us. The *Law* findes us *dead*, and gives us no strength, but leaves a man cursed still; the *Gospel* likewise finds us *dead*, but it leaves us not so, and therefore it is called *the Ministry of the Spirit*; Received you the Spirit by the *Law*, or by the *Gospel*? Gods blessed Spirit goes together with the sweet message of salvation and eternall life; and this *Spirit* doth not onely open our understandings, but incline and bend our wills and affections to imbrace the truth that is offered. Seeing therefore the *Spirit* which accompanieth the *Gospell* is mighty and powerful in operation, let none pretend impossibility; for though they find not the sweet blaze of the *Spirit* at the first or 2 hearing; yet let them still attend upon *Grace*, waiting at wisdomes gate, and the Angel wil come at length & stir the *waters*; God will make the means effectual first or last to those that in truth of heart seeke unto him; for the *Gospel* is the Chariot of the *Spirit*, and the golden Conduit through which the *Spirit* runs, and is conveyed to us; therefore if thou wouldst not *disobey* the

Cal. 3. 5.

Prov. 8. 34.

the Gospell, withstand not the Spirit of God working by the same.

Now the Spirit works with the Gospell by degrees. 1. It bringeth some to be willing to hear the Gospell, who yet presently neglect and dis-regard the same. 2. Others are more obedient for a time (as *the stony ground*) but because they opened not their hearts to the working of the Spirit only, but will be ruled partly by *carnall wisdom*, and partly by *the Spirit*, it leaves them at last altogether. 3. But some there are who give up themselves wholly to the government of Christ to be ruled in all things by his blessed Spirit; highly esteeming the treasures of heaven, and comforts of a better life, above all the fading outward felicities which this world can afford; who would not to gain any earthly thing, hurt their consciences, or once defile themselves with unfruitful workes of darknesse; fearing lest they should in any thing dishonour Christ, or grieve his good Spirit, and to such only hath the Gospell come in power. Therefore I beseech you consider of this truth; if you would not disobey the Gospell, disobey not the Spirit accompanying the same; deale faithfully with your own souls. Which of you all hath not some time or other had his heart warmed with the sweet motions of Gods Spirit? Oh do not resist these holy stirrings within you, give way to the motions of the blessed Spirit of God, second them with holy resolutions to practice the same; let them sink deep into your hearts, root them there; and never give over the holy meditation of them, till you make them your own, till you come to see *Grace* and the state of *Christianity* to be the most amiable & excellent thing in the world, and *sin* and *carnall courses* to be the most accursed thing, that is, worse than any misery, than any beggery, torment, or disgrace whatsoever. Beloved, till we have our spirits wrought upon to this high esteem of grace, and a base undervaluing of all things else, we shall rebell against Christ first or last: for until such time as the heart of man is over-powred with *goodnesse*, he cannot but disobey the Gospell, either by shutting it out altogether, or by making an evil use of what he knoweth (thereby turning the *grace* of God into *wantonnesse*) or else by revolting wholly from the truth received. When times of temptation come, unsound Christians will do one of these three, either despise, refuse, or revolt from the truth. Therefore I beseech you let your hearts be cast into the mould & fashion of the Gospell of Christ, let it be soundly bottomed and ingrafted in you, that so you may grow more and more obedient to the truth revealed, and so your end shall not be *theirs* here, *which obey not the Gospell of Jesus Christ*.

How the Spirit works with the Gospell.

Mat. 23. 20.

If we would not disobey the Gospell, disobey not the Spirit.

But how may I come to obey the Gospell?

Begge earnestly of God in the use of the meanes (else prayer is but a tempting of God) that thy soule may be convinced of what evill is in thee, and what evill is towards thee unlesse thou repent; Labour for sound conviction; for you shal not need to stir up a man that is condemned to seek out for a pardon, or a man that feels the smart of his wound to get *balm* to cure it; oh no, when our hearts are once truly humbled and pierced with a sight of our sins, then Christ will be Christ indeed unto us; mercy is sweet at such a time, any thing for a Saviour then, &

not

Quest.

Ans.

How we may come to obey the Gospell.

not before. Therefore labour every day to see more and more into the venomous & filthy nature of sin, make it as odious to thy soul as possibly thou canst, hearken to the voice of conscience, give it full scope to speak what it can, that so thou mayst fly to Christ. Consider how God plagueth us in this world for sin, how it fills us with fears and horrors, causing our consciences to torment us, and fly in our faces; consider what threatnings are denounced against sin and sinners, for the time to come. Consider the fearfull judgments of God upon others for sin, how it cast Adam out of Paradise, the Angels out of heaven, being so offensive to God, that it could no otherwise be expiated than by the death & blood shedding of the Lord Jesus. I beseech you let your hearts dwell upon these things, and consider with your selves how bitter you have found it to offend God, though now it be a time of mercy.

2 Secondly, consider how the Gospell layes open Christ unto us; *This is his commandment that we beleve in the Lord Jesus*; he that commands us to *doe no murther, not to steal, &c.* commands us likewise to beleve in Christ; He commands us to love our own souls so much, as to take the remedy which may cure them; so that now it is our duty to be good to our poore soules, and we offend God if we be not merciful to our own soules. Oh what a favour is this, that God should lay a charge upon me not to reject my own mercy, as it is in *Jonah, They who follow lying vanities forsake their own mercies*; If I do not love my own soul, and accept of mercy offered, *I make God a lyar*, and offend his Majesty.

3 Again, consider how God allures those that might except against mercy; Alas, I am laden with sinne, (will some poore soul say) why, *Come unto me all you that are heavy laden, and I will ease you*. But I have offended God, I have broken my peace, &c. yet *I beseech you be reconciled to God*; though you have offended, yet there is hope; do but consider how ready God is to help you, how continuall his mercies are, and how he stretcheth out his hands to receive us.

4 Consider further, what a sweet regiment it is to be under Christ, as a King, and as an Husband; will he not provide for his own family, for his own subjects? Beloved, it is not meer dominion that Christ stands upon, he aymes at a Fatherly and Husband-like sovereignty for the good of his children and spouse, it is their welfare he looks after; therefore I beseech you be in love with the government of Jesus Christ & his blessed Spirit, oh it is a sweet regiment; the Spirit of God leades us quietly, inlightning our understandings upon judicious grounds what to doe, by strength of reason altering our natures, and bettering us every way, both in our inward and outward man; it never leaves teaching and guiding of us till it hath brought us to heaven and happinesse.

To conclude, mark what the Apostle saith here, *What shall be the end of those that obey not the Gospell* (he cares not what they know) Many say, we have heard the Word, and we have received the Sacrament, &c. it is no matter for this, how stands the bent of your souls? what hath your obedience bin, this is that God looks after; every man can talk of religion, but where is the practice? a little obedience is worth all the discourse

course and contemplation in the world, for that serves but to justifie Gods damning of us, if we live not answerably : value not your selves therefore by your outward profession, neither judge of your estate in grace, by the knowledge of good things ; nothing but the power of godlinesse expressed in our lives, will yeeld reall comfort in the day of tryall.

And we should labour that our obedience be free and cheerfull, our obedience must be free. Psal. 110. 3. Tit. 2. 14. always upon the *wing*, (as we say) for that is *Evangelicall* obedience; Gods people under the Gospel are a *voluntary ready* people, *Zealous of good works*. Oh beloved, did we but consider what God hath done for us here, and what he means to do for us in another world, how would our hearts be enlarged in duty to his Majesty ? did we but consider of his inestimable love in the Lord Christ, pardoning such wretches as we are, and not only so, but accepting our service, and us to life everlasting, taking us from the lowest misery to the highest happinesse, from the lowest *hell* to the highest *heaven*, of *traytors* to be *Sons*, of *slaves* to be *heires* of the Kingdome, &c. Oh did we but seriously consider and beleeve these things, how would they warme our hearts, and make us plyable and constant to every good work and way ?

The Apostle having tasted the sweet favour of God in Christ, might well use it as a motive to quicken others, (*I beseech you by the tender mercies of Christ*, &c.) He knew this was a powerfull argument, and if that wrought not upon mens hearts, nothing would. Rom. 12. 1.

Let our obedience therefore be cheerfull, for now we are not in the *oldnesse of the letter*, we have not a *Legall Covenant* since Christs coming, but we serve God *in the newnesse of the Spirit*, (that is) considering that the Spirit is given in more plenty since his ascension, we should be more spirituall and heavenly in our service of God ; considering that our *Head* is already entred into that high and holy place, and we ere long shall be present with him, having but a spot of time to passe here below, how ready and zealous should we be in obedience to Gods will, and not suffer a heavy lumpishnesse and deadnesse of spirit to seize upon us in holy performances : but I hasten to the second Amplification. Rom. 7. 6.

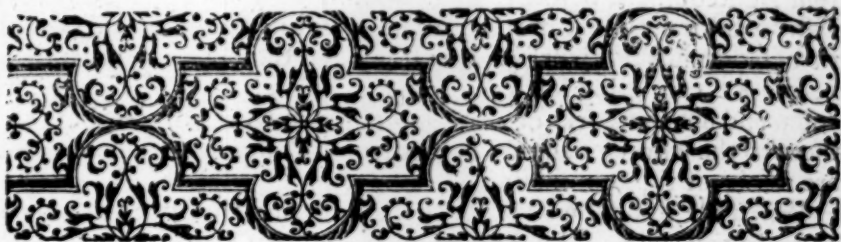
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THE



THE DIFFICULTY OF SALVATION.

SERM. XIV.

1 PET. 4. 18.

If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the wicked and ungodly appeare?



Y *righteous* here, is meant that Evangelicall righteousness which we have in the state of the Gospel, (*namely*) the righteousness of Christ imputed to us; for Christ himselfe being ours, his obedience and all that he hath, becomes ours also; and whosoever partaketh of this righteousness which is by faith, hath also a righteousness of sanctification accompanying the same, wrought in his soule by

What is meant here by righteous, to wit, a man indued with Evangelicall righteousness.

the Spirit of God, whereby his sinfull nature is changed and made holy: for *if any man be in Christ he is a new creature*. The same Spirit that assures us of our interest in Christ, purifies and cleanseth our hearts, and worketh a new life in us, opposite to our life in the first *Adam*, from whence flowes new workes of holiness and obedience through-

throughout our whole conversation: There must be an inward inherent righteousness, before there can be any works of righteousness; an Instrument must be set in tune, before it will make musick; so the Spirit of God must first worke a holy frame and disposition of heart in us, before we can bring forth any fruits of holiness in our lives; for we commend not the works of *grace* as we do the works of *Art*, but refer them to the worker: all that flowes from the *Spirit* of righteousness, are *works* of righteousness.

Rom. 13. 8.

When the soul submits it self to the *spirit*, and the body to the *soul*, then things come off kindly. Take a man that is righteous by the Spirit of God, he is righteous in all *relations*; he gives every one his due; he gives *God* his due, *spiritual worship* is set up in his heart above all; he gives *Christ* his due by *affiance* in him; he gives the holy *Angels* their due, by considering he is alwayes in their presence, that their eye is upon him in every action he doth, and every duty he performs; the *poore* have their *due* from him; those that are in *authority* have their due; if he be under any, he gives them reverence and obedience, &c. He will owe nothing to any man but love, he is righteous in all his conversation, he is a vessell prepared for every good work; I deny not but he may erre in some particular, that is nothing to the purpose: I speak of a man as he is in the disposition and bent of his heart to God and goodnesse, and so there is a thread of a righteous course, that runs along through his whole conversation; the constant tenour of his life is righteousness; he hungers and thirsts after righteousness; and labours to be more and more righteous still every way, both in *justification*, that he may have a clearer evidence of that, as also in *sanctification*, that he may have more of the *new creature* formed in him, that so he may serve God better and better all his days. Now if this man shall scarcely be saved, where shall the sinner and ungodly appear? where you have two branches.

1. The righteous shall scarcely be saved.
2. The terrible end of sinners and ungodly; Where shall they appeare?

Now in that the righteous man thus described shall scarcely be saved, consider two things.

1. That the righteous shall be saved.
2. That they shall scarcely be saved.

The righteous
are saved, no
Luke 19. 9.
Eph. 2. 6.

What doe I say, the Righteous shall be saved? he is saved already; This day is salvation come to thine house, (saith Christ to *Zachew*) We are saved by faith, and are now set in heavenly places together with him; we have a title and interest to happinesse already, there remains only a passage to the Crown by good works. We do not as the Papists doe, work to merit that we have not, but we do that we do in thankfulness for what we have: because we know we are in the state of salvation, therefore we will shew our thankfulness to God in the course of our lives.

How can we misse of salvation when we are saved already? Christ our
Head

Head being in heaven, will draw his body after him; What should hinder us? the world? Alas, we have that faith in us which overcometh the world; as for the flesh, you know what the Apostle saith, *We are not under the Law, but under grace*; the spirit in us alwayes lusteth against the flesh, and subdues it by little and little; neither can Satan or the gates of hell prevaile against us, for the grace we have is stronger than all enemies against us.

God the Father is our father in Christ, and his love and gifts are without repentance; when once we are in the state of salvation, He will preserve us by faith to salvation; and we are knit to God the Son, who will lose none of his members, the marriage with Christ is an everlasting union, whom he loves he loves to the end. As for God the Holy Ghost, (saith Christ) *I will send the Comforter, and he shall be with you to the end*: The blessed Spirit of God never departs where he once takes up his lodging: there is no question therefore of the salvation of the righteous, they are as it were saved already.

Let this teach us thus much, that in all the changes and alterations which the faith of man is subject unto, he is sure of one thing, all the troubles, and all the enemies of the world shall not hinder his salvation; *If it be possible the elect should be deceived*, but it is not possible. Oh what a comfort is this, that in the midst of all the oppositions and plottings of men and Devils, yet notwithstanding somewhat we have that is not in the power of any enemy to take from us, nor in our owne power to lose, namely *our salvation*; set this against any evill whatsoever, and it swallowes up all. Put case a man were subject to an hundred deaths one after another, what are all these to *salvation*? Put case a man were in such griefe that he wept teares of blood; alas, in the day of *salvation* all teares shall be wiped from his eyes. Set this (*if shall be saved*) against any misery you can imagine, and it will unspeakably comfort and revive the soul beyond all.

But it is here said, he shall scarcely be saved.

This is not a word of doubt, but of difficulty; is it not a word of doubt of the event, whether he shall be saved or no, (there is no doubt at all of that) but it is a word of difficulty in regard of the way and passage thither, so it is here taken, which leads me to a second point, that the way to come to salvation is full of difficulties.

Because there is much ado to get Lot out of Sodom, to get Israel out of Egypt, it is no easie matter to get a man out of the state of corruption; oh the sweetnesse of sin to an unregenerate man! oh how it cuts his very heart, to think what pleasures, and what profits, and what friends, and what esteem amongst men he must part withall; what ado there is to pull him out of the kingdome of Satan, wherein the strong man held him before.

Again, it is hard in regard of the sin that continually cleaves to them in this word, which doth as it were shackle them, and compasse them about in all their performances; *They would doe well but sin is at hand*; ready to hinder & stop them in good courses, so that they cannot serve

John 5. 4.

Rom. 11. 29.
1 Pet. 1. 5.

John 13. 1.
John 6. 14, 16.

Use.

Mat. 24. 24.

Object.

Answer.

Obser. 1.
Why the
righteous shall
scarcely be
saved.

2

Rom. 7. 21.

Rom. 7. 24.

3

God with such cheerfulness and readinesse as they desire to do; Every good work they do, it is as it were pulled out of the fire; they cannot pray but the flesh *resists*; they cannot suffer but the flesh draws back; in all their *doing* and *suffering* they carry an enemy in their own bosomes that hinders them: Beloved this is no small affliction to Gods people; how did this humble *Paul* when no other affliction laid upon him; *Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death*: it was more troublesome to him than all his *irons*, and pressures whatsoever.

Besides, it is a hard matter in regard of *Sathan*, for he is a great enemy to the peace of Gods children; when they are once pulled out of his kingdom, he sends floods of reproaches and persecutions after them, and presently sends *hue* and *crie* as *Pharaoh* after the *Israelites*, oh how it spites him! What? shall a piece of dust and clay be so near God, when I am tumbled out of heaven my self? though I cannot hinder him from salvation, I will hinder his *peace* and *joy*, he shall not have heaven upon earth, I will make him walk as uncomfortably as I can; thus the Devil as he is a malignant creature, full of envy against Gods poore Saints, so he is a bitter enemy of the peace and comfort which they enjoy, and therefore troubles them with many temptations from himselfe and his *instruments*, to interrupt their peace; and makes the hearts of Gods people sad all he can.

Micah 7. 1.
Jer. 3. 14.

Then by reason of great discouragement and ill usage which they find in the world from *wicked men*, who are the Devils pipes, led with his spirit to vex and trouble the *meek* of the earth; (for though they think not of it, Satan is in their devilish natures) he joyns and goes along with their spirits in hating and opposing the Saints of God: for indeed, what hurt could they do but by his instigation? How are good men despised in the world? How are they made the only Butt to shoot at? Alas beloved, we should rather encourage men in the wayes of holiness; we see the number of such as truly fear God is but small, soone reckoned up, they are but as *grapes* after the *vintage*, or a few *berries* after the *shaking*: one of a *City*, two of a *Tribe*, they have little encouragement from any, but discouragements on all sides.

Psal. 73.
Jer. 12. 6. 2.

Besides this, *scandall* makes it a hard matter to be saved: to see evil courses and evil persons flourish and countenanced in the world; Oh it goes to the heart of Gods people, and makes them stagger at Gods *providence*: it is a bitter temptation, and shakes the faith of holy men, as we see, *Psal. 73*. Again, it makes the heart of a good Christian bleed within him, to see *scandals* arise from professors of the Gospel, when they are not so watchfull as they should be, but bring a reproach upon Religion by their licentious lives.

Yea GODS Children suffer much for their *Friends*, whose wicked courses are laid to their charge, and sometimes; even by their *friends*; for whilst they live here, the best of all are subject to some weakness or other, which causeth even those that are our incouragers through jealousy or corruption, one way or another, to dishearten

dishearten and trouble us in the way to heaven.

This likewise makes the way difficult, we are too too apt to offend God daily, giving him just cause to withdraw his spirit of comfort from us, which makes us go mourning all the day long, wanting those sweet refreshments of spirituall joy and peace we had before; the more comfort Gods child hath in communion with God, the more he is grieved when he wants it. When Christ wanted the sweet solace of his Father upon the *Crosse*, how did it trouble him? *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* How did he sweate water and blood in the garden, when he felt but a little while his Fathers displeasure for sinne? Thus is it with all Gods children, they are of Christs mind in their spiritual desertions.

6

And when they have gotten a little *grace*, how difficult is it to keep it? to keep our selves in the sense of Gods love? to manage our Christian State aright? to walk worthy of the Gospel, that God may still do us good, and delight to be present with us? What a great difficulty is it to be alwayes striving against the Streame, and when we are cast back, to get forward still, and not be discouraged till we come to the haven? None comes to heaven, but they know how they come there.

Now God will have it thus to sweeten heaven unto us; after a conflicting life, peace is welcome; heaven is heaven indeed after trouble; we can relish it then.

Why God will have the righteous with such difficulty saved.

Because God will discard *hypocrites* in this life; who take up so much of Religion as stands with their ease and credit in the world, avoiding every difficulty which accompanies godlinesse, but so they may swim two wayes at once, goe on in their lusts still, and be religious withall, this they approve of; therefore God will have it a hard matter to be saved, to frustrate the vaine hope of such wretches. Alas, it is an easie matter to be an *hypocrite*, but not to live godly.

1

3

If the righteous be saved with much adoe, then never enter upon the profession of Religion with vain hopes of *ease* and *pleasure*, that it shall be thus and thus with thee, &c. herein thou dost but delude thy owne soule, for it will prove otherwise. Forecast therefore what will fall, and get provision of grace before hand to sustain thee. As if a man were to goe a dangerous journey, he provides himselfe of weapons, and cordials. and all the encouragements he can, lest he should faint in the way; whereas he that walks for his pleasure provides nothing, he cares not for his weapon or his cloake, because if a storme comes, he can runne under shelter, or into a house presently. He that makes Religion a *recreation*, can walk a turn or two for his pleasure, and when any difficulty arises, can retire and draw in his hornes againe. An *hypocrite* hath his reservations & politick ends, & therefore what needs he any great provision to support him, when he knows how to winde out of trouble well enough, rather than to stand courageously to any thing. But a true Christian that makes it the main worke of his life to please God, armes himselfe for the worst that can befall him,

Vii.

Phil. 3. 11.

and will be saved through thick or thin, smooth or rough, whatsoever comes on it, so God will save his soul he cares not; but rejoiceth (with Paul) if by any meanes he can attaine the resurrection of the dead, by any meanes, *it is no matter what*; Let fire and fagot meet with him, yet he is resolved not to retire for any trouble or persecution whatsoever that stands between him and happinesse. He is purposely armed to break through every opposition to the best things, and what ever may separate his soule from the favour of God.

How to make
the way to
heaven easie.

1

I beseech you beloved think of these things, and let it be your wisdom to make the way to heaven as easie as you can; to this end *beg the Spirit of Christ*; you know the *holy Spirit* is full of *life*, and *strength*; it is a Spirit of *light* and *comfort*, and whatsoever is *good*; the Spirit of God is like the *winde*; as it is subtile in operation, and invisible, so it is strong and mighty, it beares all before it; Oh therefore get this blessed Spirit to enlighten thee, to quicken thee, to support thee, and it will carry thy soule courageously along, above all oppositions and discouragements whatsoever in the way to happinesse.

2

Get likewise the particular *graces* of the *Spirit*, which will much cheere thee in thy Christian course; above all labour for a *spirit of humility*; an humble man is fit to doe or suffer any thing; a proud man is like a gouty hand, or a swelled arme, unfit for any Christian performance, he is not in a state to do good in; but an humble man is *thankfull* that God will honour him so far as to let him suffer for the cause of Christ; he is wondrous *empty* and *vile* in his owne eyes, and admires why God should reserve such infinite matters for so base a worm as he is.

Matth. 11. 29.

When Christ would have us *take his yoke upon us*, he advises us *to learn of him to be meek and lowly*. Some might say, This yoke is *heavy*, it will pinch me and gall me: No, saith our *Saviour*, it shall be very *light* and *easie*; but how shall I get it to be so? Why, get but an *humble* and *meek* spirit, and that will *bring rest to your soules*.

3

Again, labour for a *spirit of love*; *Love is strong as death*; it will carry us through all. The love of Christ in the *Martyrs* when the fire was kindled about them, made them despise all torments whatsoever: this will warm our hearts, and make us go cheerfully to work. Let but a spirit of love be kindled in Gods child, and it is no matter what he suffers; cast him into the *fire*, cast him into the *dungeon*, into prison, whatsoever it be, he hath *that* kindled in his heart, which will make him digest any thing. We see the Disciples, when they had the Spirit of Christ within them, to warme their hearts, what cared they for whipping, or Stocks, &c: You see even base *carnall love* will make a man indure *poverty*, *disgrace*, what not? and shall not this fire that comes from heaven, when it is once kindled in our hearts prevaile much more? what will make our passage to heaven sweet, if this will not? Nothing is grievous to a person that loves.

4

Exercise your *hope* likewise, set before your eyes the crown & kingdom of heaven, those admirable things contained in the word of God, which no tongue can expresse; let *hope* feed upon these delicacies, cast

Anchor

Anchor in heaven, and see if it will not make thee go on cheerfully in a Christian course.

Faith will overcome the world, all the snares of prosperity that would hinder us *on the right hand*; *Faith* presents things of a higher nature to the soul, better than they; *faith* likewise overcomes temptations *on the left hand*, all terrors and discomforts whatsoever, it considers these are nothing to the *terror of the Lord*; therefore *faith* is called *the evidence of things not seen*, because it presents things that are absent as present to the soule: If life and happinesse be once truly presented to our hearts, what can all the world doe to hinder our passage thither? Heb. 11. 1.

Lastly, we should much endeavour *the mortifications of our lusts*; for what is it that makes the way to heaven irksome unto us? Is it not this corrupt and proud *flesh* of ours? which will indure nothing, no not the wait of a straw, but is all for ease and quiet. It is not duty which makes our way difficult; for it was *meat and drink* to Christ *to doe the will of his Father*. John 4. 34.

Why is it not so with us?

Because he was borne without sinne, when Sathan came; he found nothing (of his own) in him; but when he sollicites us, he finds a correspondency betwixt our corrupt hearts aud himself, whereby having intelligence of what we haunt, and what we love, he will be sure to molest us: the lesse we have of the works of Sathan in us, the lesse will be our trouble; and the more we doe the will of God, and strive against our corruptions, the more will be our comfort; this will make holy duties delightfull to us; but if we favour and cherish corruption, it will make religion harsh; for the wayes of *wisdom* are wayes of *pleasure in themselves*, and to the *regenerate*. But I hasten to the second cause.

Quest.
Answ.

Where shall the sinner and ungodly appear?

By *sinner* he meanes him that makes a trade of sin, as we say, a man is of such a trade, because he is daily at worke of it, and lives by it; so a man is a trader in sin, that lives in corrupt courses; for it is not one act that denominates a sinner, but the constant practice of his life. What he means by sinner.

Now this question, *Where shall the ungodly appear*, implies a strong denyall, *He shall be able to appear no where*, especially in these three times.

1. In the day of publick calamity, when Gods judgements are abroad in the world; the wicked are as *Chaffe* before the *wind*, as wax before the *Sunne*, as stubble before the fire: when God comes to deal with a company of gracelesse wretches, how will he consume and scatter them, & sweep them away as *dung* from the face of the earth? he will universally make a ridance of them all at once: where shall a *Nabal* stand when judgment comes upon him? alas, his heart is become a stone; where shall *Balthazer* appear when he sees a handwriting on the wall? 1 Sam. 25.
Dan. 5.

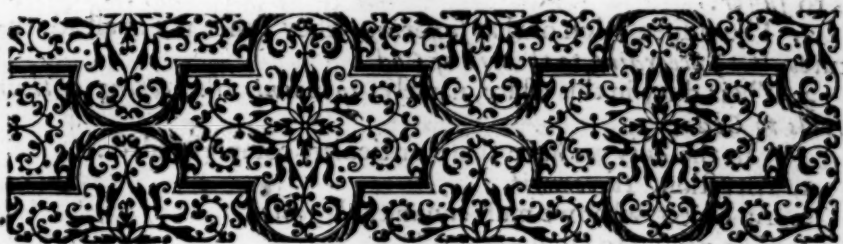
Oh how the wicked tremble & quake when God comes to judg them

in this world, though they were a terror to others before ?

But where shall they stand in the houre of *death*? when the world can hold them no longer, when friends shall forsake them, when God will not receive them, when Hell is ready to devour them, what will become of them then?

Lastly, *Where shall the sinner appear* at the day of judgment, that great and terrible day of account, when they shall see all the world in a combustion round about them, and the Lord Jesus coming in flaming fire, *with his mighty Angels*, to take vengeance on such as obey not the Gospel? how will they then call for the *Mountains* to cover them, and the *Hills* to fall upon them, to *hide them from the face of him that sitteth on the Throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb*. I beseech you let the meditation of these things sink deep into your hearts, dwell upon them, remember that they are matters which neerly concern your soul, and no vain words touching you and your welfare. I come now to that which I intend chiefly to insist upon therefore desire your best attention.

THE



THE SAINTS HIDING-PLACE IN THE EVILL DAY.

SERM. XV.

1 PET. 4. 19.

Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit their soules to him in well-doing, as to a faithfull Creator.



Though *Divinity* be cleare in other differences from carnall or naturall reasons; yet it hath *homogeneal* reasons and grounds of *its own*, whence come inferences as *naturall*, as it is for the tree to bear fruit, or the Sunne to shine; so upon the former divine grounds (for it is a matter of *suffering* wherein we must have pure *Divinity* to support our souls) the Apostle comes to bring a spiritnall inference sutable to the same, in the words read unto you: *Wherefore* (concluding all to be true that was said before) *Let them that suffer commit their souls to him.*

Wherein

Wherein consider, 1. That the state and condition of Gods children is to *suffer*.

2. The dispensation of that *suffering*, (they suffer not at all adventures, but) *according to the will of God*.

3. Their duty in this estate, namely, *to commit the keeping of their souls to God*.

In the *duty* we have these particulars comprehended:

1. An action, *To commit*.

2. An object, what we must commit, *the soule*.

3. The person to whom, *to God*.

4. The manner, *in well-doing*.

Lastly, the reason which should move us hereunto, *implied* in these words, *as unto a faithfull Creator*.

Whatsoever may support the doubting of a godly man in any trouble, and inforce upon him this duty of committing his soul to God, is briefly comprised in *this*, that God stands in that near relation of a *Creator*, yea, of a *faithfull Creator* to us; this is the scope of the words.

Obser. 1.
That the state
of Gods chil-
dren is to suffer.

Obser. 1. That the state of Gods children is to suffer, yea, to suffer of God; for sometimes he seemes to be an enemy to his dearest servants, as unto *Job*; but chiefly they are in a *militant* estate and condition here.

Why Gods
children must
suffer here.

Because they live among *those* that they cannot but suffer from wheresoever they live: Suppose they live among *Christians*, yet there are many Christians *in name*, that are not so *indeed*; there have been secret underminers in all ages, and what else may they look for but *suffering* from these. All that ever truly feared God, and made conscience of their wayes, have found afflictions among *false brethren*: It was never heard of that a *Sheep* should pursue a *Wolfe*.

2

They must suffer also in regard of *themselves*, for the truth is, the best of us all have many *lusts* to be subdued, and a great deal of *corruption* to be purged out, before we can come to *heaven*, that pure and holy place, into which *no unclean thing can enter*. Though a Garden be never so fruitfull, yet after a showre it will need weeding; so after long *peace* the Church of God gathers soyle, and needs clensing.

Objct.

But some carnal wretch will say, I thank God I never suffered in my life, but have enjoyed peace and prosperity, and my hearts content in every thing.

Answ.

In the best e-
state there will
be suffering
one way or o-
ther.

Then suspect thy self to be in a bad estate, for every true Christian suffers in one kind or other, either from *without* or *within*; sometimes Gods children are troubled more with *corruption* than with *affliction*; at other times their peace is troubled *both* with corruption *within*, and with affliction *without*; at the best they have sufferings of *sympathie*, Shall the *members* of Christ suffer in other *contraries*; and we professe our selves to be living members, and yet not sympathize with them? we must be conformable to our *Head*, before we can come to *heaven*. But the dispensation of our suffering is according to the will of God, where note two things.

1. That it is Gods will we should suffer.

2. When

2. *When we suffer, we suffer according to his will.*

To passe briefly over these, as not being the thing I aime at.

Gods will concerning our suffering is *permissive* in respect of those that doe us harme, but in regard of our patient enduring injuries, it is his *approving* and commanding will; we are enjoyned to suffer, and they are permitted to wrong us.

It seems then there is some excuse for those that persecute the Saints, they doe but *according to Gods will*, and if it be so, who dares speak against them?

Objeſt.

It is not Gods *commanding* will, but his *suffering* will; he useth their malice for his own ends; God lets the raine loofe upon their necks; as a man is said to set a dog upon another, when he unloofeth his chain; so God is said to *command* them, when he lets them loofe to doe mischief; they are full of *malice* themselves, which God useth as Physicians doe their *poysen* to cure poysen; God and they goe two contrary wayes; as a man in a ship walks one way, but is *carried* another. In the death of Christ, the will of *Judas* and the rest went *one way*, and Gods will another; so in all our *sufferings*, when God useth wicked men, *their* will is *destructive* and hostile, but Gods will is clean otherwise, ayiming at the good of his people in all this. *Nebuchadnezar* did the will of God in *carrying the people captive*, however *he thought not so*. Every sinfull wretch that offers violence to the poor *Saints*, imagine they doe God good service in it, when as indeed they do but execute the malice & venome of their own hearts. In the highest heavens (as they say in Philosophy) the first thing moved is by a violent motion; the *sun* is carryed about the heavens violently, against its *own* proper motion, which inclines to a clean contrary course; so God dealeth with wicked men, he carryes them they know not whither; they are set to do mischief, and God useth their sinfull dispositions for his own ends, which plainly shewes, that God is without all fault, and they without all excuse.

Eſay 10. 7.

But observe further, *that we never suffer but when God will*, and beloved, his will is not that we should alwayes suffer; (though generally our estate be so in one kind or other) God is *not alwayes chiding*, but hath times of breathing and intermission, which he vouchsafes his children for their good. He knowes if we had not some respite, some refreshment, we should soone be consumed and brought to nothing. *The Lord knows whereof we are made, and considers that we are but dust*; therefore he saith, *Though for a season you are in heavinesse, yet rejoyce and be glad.*

Obſer.

That we never suffer, but when God will.
Pſal. 103. 9.
Pſal. 103. 14.

1 Pet. 1. 6.

And this the Lord doth out of mercy to his poor creatures, that they might not sink before him, but gather strength of grace, and be the better fitted to beare further crosses afterwards. You know, *Acts 9.* after *Sauls* conversion, when he was become a *Paul*, then the Church had *rest*, and increased in the comforts of the Holy Ghost; God gives his people *pausing times*, some *lucida intervalla*; our time of going into trouble is in Gods hands; our time of *abiding* therein, and our *coming out* thereof is all in Gods hands; As in our callings he preserves our *going out* and our *coming in*, so in every trouble that befalls us, we come in and tarry there,

Acts 9. 31. 1

there and goe out of the same when he pleaseth. He brings us to the fire as the Goldsmith puts his metals and holds them *there*, till he hath refined them, and purged out the dross, & then brings them out again? *Our times* (as David saith excellently) *are in thy hands, O Lord*. Alas, if our times were in our *enemies* hands, we should *never* come out; if they were in our *own* hands, we would never stay in trouble, but come out as *soone* as we enter in, nay, we would not come into trouble at all if we could chuse. Beloved, every thing of a Christian is deare unto God; his *health* is precious, his *blood* is precious, especially *precious* to the Lord *is the death* of his Saints: Doe you think therefore he will let them suffer without his will? No, he will have a valuable consideration of all those that are malignant *Persecutors* of his people at last; and it is for matters better than life that God lets his children suffer here; as for this life, it is but a *vaine shadow*, as it were *nothing*; God regards us not as we are in this present world, but as *strangers*; therefore he suffers us to sacrifice *this life*, upon better termes than *life*; or else he would never let us suffer for his truth, and seale it with our dearest blood, as many of the *Saints* have done.

Vse. Considering then all our sufferings are by the appointment and will of God, let us bring our souls to an holy resignation unto his Majesty, not looking so much to the *grievance* we are under, as to the hand that sent it; we should with *one eye* consider the *things*, with another *eye* the will of God in the same. When a man considers, I suffer now, but it is by the will of God, he puts me upon it, how cheerfully will such a one commit his soule to the Lord? It is as hard a matter to *suffer* Gods will, as to *do* his will; *passive* obedience is as hard as *active*; in the *active*, we labour that what *we do* may please God; in the *passive*, we must endeavour that what he doth may please us; our hearts are as untoward to the one as to the other; therefore let us beg of God to bring *our* wills to the obedience of his blessed will in every thing: Would you have a pattern of this? Look upon our blessed *Saviour*, to whom we must be conformable in *obedience*, if ever we will be conformable in *glory*: *Lo I come* (saith he) *I am ready to do thy will O Lord*: what was the whole life of Christ, but a *doing* and a *suffering* of Gods will? *Behold, it is written in the volumn of thy Book, that I should do thy will*; and here I am ready prest for it. It should therefore be the disposition of all those that are led by the Spirit of Christ, (as all must be that hope to raigne with him) to be willing to suffer with Christ here, and say with him, Lord, I am here ready to *do* and suffer whatsoever thou requirest; when once we are brought to this, all the quarrel is ended between God and us.

Heb. 10. 9.

Verse 17.

I come now to that which I chiefly intend, which is the Christians *Duty*.

Let him commit his soul to God in well-doing; wherein observe,

1. The manner *how* he must commit, *in well-doing*.
2. What, *his soule*.
3. To whom, *to God*.
4. The reasons moving, *implied* in these words, *as unto a faithfull Creator*.

Now

Now this *well-doing* must be distinguished into two times.

1. Before our suffering; when a son of *Belial* shall offer violence to a poor Saint of God, what a comfort is this, that *he* suffers in *well-doing*? Oh beloved, we should so carry our selves that none might speak evill justly against us, that none, unlesse it were wrongfully might do us hurt; we should be in an estate of well doing continually in our generall and particular *callings*, we must not go out of our *sphere*, but serve God in our standings, that if trouble comes it may find us in a way of well pleasing, either doing works of *charity*, or else the works of our particular calling, wherein God hath set us; In all that befalls thee look to this, that thou suffer not as *an evill doer*.

So likewise in *suffering* we must commit our souls to God in *well-doing* in a double regard.

1. *We must carry our selves generally well in all our sufferings.*
2. In particular, *We must do well to them that doe us wrong.*

First, I say, in *affliction* our carriage must be generally good in respect of God, by a *meek* behaviour under his hand, without *murmuring* against him.

2. In regard of the *cause of God*, that we betray it not through fear or cowardise, through base ayms and intentions, &c. but indeavour to carry it with a good conscience in all things; when we make it clear by managing any thing, that we are led with the *cause* and conscience of our *duty*, it works mightily upon them that wrong us. 1. It wins those that are indifferent; and 2. Confounds the obstinate, & stops their mouths. Therefore let us carry our selves well, not only *before*, but in suffering; we may not fight against them with their own weapons, (that is) be malicious as *they* are malicious, and raile as they raile: Beloved, this is as if a man should see another drink *poysen*, and he will drink too for company; *he* is *poysened* with *malice*, and *thou* to revenge thy selfe, wilt be *poysened* too. What a preposterous course is this? Ought we not rather to behave our selves as befits the cause of Christ, as becomes our Christian profession, and as befits *him* whose children we are.

We should have an eye to God, and an eye to *our selves*, and an eye to *others*, and an eye to *the cause* in hand, so we shall do well. We must not *commit our souls to God in idlenesse, doing nothing at all*, nor yet in *evil doing*, but in *well doing*; We must have a care (if we would suffer with comfort) not to study how to avoid suffering by tricks, so to hurt the cause of Christ; this is to avoid suffering by *sin*, to leap out of one danger into another. Is it not the least evill of *sin* worse than the greatest evill of *punishment*? What doth a man get by pleasing men to displease God? perhaps a little ease for the present. Alas, what is this to that unexpressible horror and despaire, which will one day seize upon thy soul eternally, for betraying the blessed cause and truth of Christ? How can we expect God should own us *another day*, when we will not own *him* in his cause, and his members, to stand for them now? think on that speech of our Saviour, *Whoever shall be ashamed of me, or of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him shall the Son of*

Mark 2. 38.

of man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of his Father.

Therefore avoid not any suffering, by sin; see how blessed S. Paul carried himselfe in this case; *The Lord* (saith he) *hath delivered me, & will deliver me*; from what, from death? no, from every evill worke. What, will God keep him from evil sufferings? No, for immediately after, he was put to death; what then? why he will preserve me from every evill worke; that is from every sinfull act, which may hurt the cause of Christ, or blemish my profession; this was it Paul chiefly regarded; not whether he will preserve me from death or trouble, I leave that to him; but this I hope and trust to, that he will preserve me from every evill worke to his heavenly Kingdome. Thus should it be with every Christian in the Cause of religion, or in a cause of justice, &c. for there is not any good cause but it is worth our lives to stand in, if we be called to it; It is necessary we should be just, it is not so necessary we should live; A Christians main care is how to doe well, and if he can go on in that course, he is a happy man.

Object.

But I cannot doe well, but I shall suffer ill.

Ans.

Labour therefore to carry thy selfe well in suffering evill; not only in the generall, but even in particular towards those persons that doe thee wrong; endeavour to requite their evil with good; there is a great measure of self-denyaill required, to be a Christian, especially in matter of revenge, to pray for them that curse us, to doe good to them that persecute us, and so to heap coals of fire upon our enemies heads. How is that? There are,

1. Coals of Conversion.

2. Coals of Confusion.

How in suffering we heape coales of fire.

You know Coals doe either melt or consume; if our enemies belong to God, we shall heap coals of fire to convert them, and make them better by our holy carriage in suffering: If they be wicked gracelesse wretches, we shall heap coals of fire to consume them; for it will aggravate their just damnation, when they do ill to those that deserve well of them.

Object.

Some will say, Christianity is a strange condition, that enforceth such things upon men, that are so contrary to Nature.

Ans.

It is so indeed, for we must be new moulded before ever we can come to heaven; we must put off our whole self, and he is gone a great way in Religion, that hath brought his heart to this passe: None ever overcame himselfe in these matters out of religious respects, but he found a good issue at last. It is a sweet evidence of the state of grace, (none better) when a man can love his very enemies, and those that have done him most wrong; it is an argument, that such a man hath something above nature in him. What is above nature if this be not, for a man to overcome himselfe in this sweet appetite of revenge, Revenge is most naturall to a man, it is as Sugar (as the Heathen saith) and for a man to overcome himselfe in that, it argues the power of grace and godlinesse in such a one.

As Christianity is an excellent estate, an admirable advancing of a man to a higher condition, so it must not seeme strange for those that are

are *Christians*, to be raised to a higher pitch of soul than other men. See how our *Saviour* dealt in this particular, *Father forgive them, they know not what they do*; and so likewise *Stephen*, being led by the same Spirit of Christ) desired God *not to lay this sin to their charge*; and so all the *Martyrs* in the first state of the Church, (when the blood of Christ was warme, and the remembrance of Christ was fresh) were wont to pray for their enemies, committing their soules to God in well doing.

Luke 23. 34.

Acts 7. 60.

I beseech you let us labour by all means possible to bring our hearts hereunto, if any thing overcome, *this* will do it, *to suffer well*. The Church of God is a company of men that gaine and overcome by suffering in doing good: Thus the *Dove* overcomes the *Eagle*, the *Sheep* overcomes the *Wolf*, the *Lamb* overcomes the *Lion*, &c. It hath been so from the beginning of the world, *meek* Christians by suffering quietly, have at length overcome those that are malicious, and have gained even their very enemies to the love of the truth. What shall we think then of the greatest part of the world, who never think of *suffering*, (which is the first lesson in Christianity) but study their ease and contentment, accounting the blessed *Martyrs* too prodigall of their blood, &c.

The excellent victory of suffering.

Others there are, who if once they come to *suffer*, presently fall to shifting and plotting, how to get forth again by unlawfull meanes, oftentimes making shipwrack of a good conscience, and dishonouring the Gospel of God. I beseech you consider these things. Every man would have Christ, and be *religious*, so long as they may enjoy peace and quietnesse; but if once trouble or persecution arises, then farewell religion, they cast off their profession *then*. I wish this were not the case of many seeming Christians in these our dayes.

But suppose a man carry himselfe *ill* in *suffering*.

There is not the least *promise* of comfort in *Scripture* to such a man, unlesse he *return*, and seek the Lord by timely *repentance*, for all *incongruement* is to *well doing*: Oh what a pittifull thing is it for the soul to be in such a state, as that it dares not commit it self to God! A man in *evil doing* cannot goe home to his own conscience for comfort, nor have any inward peace in the least action he performs, so long as he doth it with false *aymes*, and carnall *affections*, &c. who would deprive himself of the comfort of suffering in a good cause for want of *integrity*? I beseech you therefore carry your selves *well* in any thing you either *doe* or *suffer*, otherwise no blessing can be expected; for we *tempt* the Lord, and make him *accessary* to us, when we commit our soules to him in *ill doing*: Even as your *Pirates* and other Miscreants in the world, that will *rob*, and *steale*, and doe *wickedly*, and yet pray to God to bless them in their base courses; what is this but to make God like themselves, as if he approved their theft and horrible blasphemy?

But what must we *commit* to God in *well doing*? the keeping of our *souls*: The soul is the more excellent part, witnesse he that purchased the same with his dearest blood; *what wil it profit a man* (saith our Saviour) *to gain the whole world, and lose his own soul*? Who could know the price of a soul better than he that gave his life for redemption of it?

Marke 8. 36.

yea if the whole *world* were laid in one balance, and the *soul* in another, the *soul* were better than all. Therefore whatsoever estate thou art in, let thy first care be for thy *soule*, that it may go well with *that*. You know in any danger or combustion, (suppose the firing of an house) *that* which a man chiefly looks after is his *jewels* and *precious* things, I have some wealth in such a place, if I could but have *that* I care for no more, let the rest goe: So it is with a Christian, whatsoever becomes of him in this world, he looks to his precious *soul*, that *that* may be layd up safely in the hands of God. Suppose a man were robbed by the high way, and had some speciall *jewell* about him, though every thing else were taken away from him, yet so long as that is left, he thinks himself a happy man, and saith, they have taken away some luggage, but they have left me *that* which I prize more than all: so it is with a Christian, let him be stripped of all he hath, so his *soul* be not hurt, but all safe and well *there*, he cares not much.

Quest.

But what should we desire *our souls* to be kept from in this world?

Ans.

From *sin* and the evill consequents thereof. Beloved, we have great need our *souls* should be kept by God, for alas, what *sin* is there but we shall fall into it, unlesse God preserve us in *peace* and comfort, and assurance of a better estate? what would become of our poore *souls* if we had them in our own keeping? *Achitophel* had the keeping of his own *soul*, and what became of him? First, he did run into the *sin* of *treason*, and afterwards (being a wicked *Politician*, and an *Atheist*, having no delight in God) was the executioner of *himselfe*. We shall be ready (as *Job* saith) *to keare our own souls, if God hath not the keeping of them*; we shall teare them with desperate thoughts, as *Judas*, who never committed his *soul* to God, but kept it *himselfe*, and we see what became of him. The Apostle bids us goe to God in prayer, and committing our *souls* to *him*, *to keep from sin, despair, distrust*, and all spirituall evill whatsoever, *and then the peace of God which passeth all understanding* (as the word in the Originall is) *shall guard our soules in Christ*; our *soules* have need of *guarding*, and we of our selves are not sufficient to doe it, therefore we should commit them unto God, for except he preserve us we shall soon perish.

Phil. 4. 7.

Wicked men
think that
they have no
soules.

I am ashamed to speak of it, and yet notwithstanding the courses of men are such, that they inforce a man to speak that which he is even ashamed of: What doe I speak of committing your *soules* to God, when many thousands in the world live as if they had no *souls* at all? I am perswaded, that your common swearers, & profane wretches, who wrong their *souls* to pleasure their *bodies*, and prostitute both *body* and *soul*, and all to their base *lusts*, think for the time that they have no *souls*, they think not that there is such an *excellent* immortal *substance* breathed into them by God, which must live for ever, in eternal *happiness* or endless *miserie*; Did they beleve this, they would not wound and stain their precious *soules* as they do; they would not obey every base lust out of the abundance of profaneness in their hearts, even for nothing, as many notorious loose persons do: Oh could we but get this principle into

into people, that they have immortall souls which must live for ever, they would soon be better than they are; but the Devil hath most men in such *bondage*, that their lives *speak* that they beleevē they have no soules, by their ill usage of them.

But must we not commit our *bodies* and our *estates* to God as well as our soules?

Object.

Yes, all we have, for that is only well kept which God keeps, but yet in time of suffering we must be at a point with these things; if God will have our *liberty*, if he will have our *wealth*, if he will have our *life* and *all*, we must hate all for Christs sake; but we must not be at such a point with our soules, we must keep them close to God, and desire him to keep them *in well doing*.

Ans.

Suppose it come to an exigent, that we must either sin and hurt our souls, or else lose all our outward good things.

Object.

We must desire God to preserve our souls, whatsoever becomes of these; our principall care must be that *that* be not blemished in the least kind; for alas, other things must be parted with *first* or *last*; this *bodie* of ours, or whatsoever is deare in the world, must be stripped from us and layed in the dust ere long. But here is our comfort, though our body be dead, yet our soules are themselves still; dead S. Paul is Paul still: our body is but the case or tabernacle wherein our soul dwells; especially a mans *self* is his soul; keep that and keep all. I beseech you therefore, as things are in worth and excellency in Gods account, let our esteem be answerable: you have many *complements* in the world, how doth your *body*, &c. meer complements *indeed*, but how few will enquire how our souls do? alas, that is in poor case; the *body* perhaps is well looked unto, *that* is clothed, and care taken that nothing be wanting to it, but the poor soul is ragged, and wounded, and naked; Oh that men were sensible of that miserable condition their poor souls are in!

Ans.

Our chief care must be over our soules.

Beloved, the soul is the better part of a man, and if that miscarries, all miscarries; if the *soul* be not well, the *body* will not continue long in a good estate. Bernard saith sweetly, *Oh body, thou hast a noble guest dwelling in thee, a soul of such inestimable worth, that it makes thee truly noble*; whatsoever goodness and excellency is in the *body*, is communicated from the *soul*; when *that* once departs, the *body* is an unlovely thing, without *life* or *sense*; the very sight of it cannot be indured of the dearest friends. What an incredible baseness is it therefore, that so precious a thing as the *soul* is, should serve these vile bodies of ours. Let the *body* stay its leisure; the time of the *resurrection* is the time of the *body*; in this life it should be servicable to our soul in *suffering* and *doing* whatsoever God calls us unto; Let our bodies serve our souls *now*; and then body and soul shall for ever after be happy; whereas, if we, to gratifie our *bodies* do betray our souls, both are undone.

Beloved, the Devil and devilish minded men (acted with his spirit) have a speciall spight to the soul: Alas, what doe they ayme at in all their wrongs and injuries to Gods children? Do they care to hurt the *body*; indeed they wil do *this* rather than nothing at all; they wil rather

play at a small game than sit out: the Devill will enter into the *Swine*, rather than stand out altogether; some mischief he will do however; but his *main* spight is at the *soul*, to vex and disquiet that, and taint it with sinne all he can. Considering therefore that it is *Satans* ayme to unloose our hold from God, by defiling our soules with *sin*, so to put a divorce betwixt his blessed *Majesty* and us; oh let it be our chief care to see to that which Satan strikes at most. He did not so much care in *Jobs* trouble for his *goods*, or for his *house*, or *children*, &c. alas, he aymed at a further mischief than *this*, his plot was how to make him *blaspheme* and wound his soul, that so there might be a difference betwixt God and him: He first tempts us to *commit* sin, and afterwards to *despair* for sin.

Quest.

But to whom must the *soul* be committed?

Ans.

Our souls must be committed to God.

Commit the keeping of your soules to God; Indeed he only can keep our soules; we cannot keep them our selves, neither can any thing else in the world doe it. Some when they are *sick* will commit their selves to the *Physitian*, and put all their trust in him; when they are in *trouble* they will commit their selves to some great *friend*; when they have any bad naughty *cause* to mannage, they will commit themselves to their *purse*, and think that shall beare them out in any thing; one thinks his *wit* and policy shall secure him; another that his shifts may shelter him, &c. and indeed the heart of man is so full of *Atheism* that it can never light upon the right *object*, to trust God alone, untill it sees every thing else faile, as being insufficient to support the soul, or to yeeld any solid comfort in times of extremity and distresse.

Quest.

But why must we commit our soules to God?

Ans.

Obser.
Our soul is not satisfied but by strong and sound reasons.

Because he is a *faithfull Creator*; Whence observe,

That the soul of man being an understanding Essence, will not be satisfied and settled without sound Reasons: Comfort is nothing else but reasons, stronger than the *evil* which doth afflict us; when the *reasons* are more forcible to ease the mind, than the grievance is to trouble it: It is no difficult matter to commit our souls to God, when we are once perswaded that he is a *faithfull Creator*.

A man commits himselfe to another man, and hath no other reason for it, but onely he is perswaded of his ability and credit in the world, that he is a man of estate and power to doe him good; so it is in this businesse of *Religion*, our souls are carryed to any thing *strongly*, when they are carryed by strong *reasons*; as in this particular of trusting God with our souls, when we see sufficient reasons inducing thereto, we easily resigne them into his hands: This shews, that Popery is an uncomfortable Religion, which brings men to despaire; they have no reason for what they maintain: What reason can they give for their doctrine of *doubling*, *transubstantiation*, *perfect obedience to the law*, &c. these are unreasonable things, the soul cannot yeeld to such absurdities, it must have strong reasons to establish it, as here to consider God as a *faithfull Creator*, &c. there is something in God to answer all the *doubts* and *fears* of the soul, and to satisfy it in any condition whatsoever. This is the very foundation of *Religion*; not that any worth can

accrue

accrue to the *Creator* from the *creature*, but that there is an *All Sufficient* in the *Creator* to relieve the poor *creature*: If a man consider in what *order* God created him, it will make him trust God; *Paradise* and all in it were ready for him so soone as he came into the world: God created us after his *own Image*, that as he was Lord of all things, so we should be Lord of the *creatures*; they were all at his service, that he might serve God; therefore after every thing else was created he was made, that so God might bring him as it were to a table ready furnished.

And not only in *nature*, but in *holinesse*, having an immortall and invisible soule, resembling God. We must take God here as a *Creator* of our whole man, *body* and *soul*, and of the *new creature* in us; God made man at the first, but that was not so much as for God to be *made man*, to make us *new creatures*: God created our *bodies* out of the *dust*, but our *souls* come immediatly from *himself*, he breathed *them* into us; and in this respect he is a higher *Creator* than in the other; for when we had marred our first making, and became more like *beasts* than *men*, (for indeed every one that is not like God, sympathizeth with beast or devils one way or other) God in Christ made us new again; yea God became *man*, to enrich us with all grace and goodness, to free us from the hands of *Satan*, and bring us to an eternall estate of communion with himselfe in heaven for all the old heaven, and the old earth shall passe away, and the old condition of creatures, and a new life shall be given them: God that made the *new* heaven and the *new earth*, hath made us for them. Considering therefore that God gave us our *first* being, & when we were worse than naught, gave us a *second* being, in regard of our new creation, how should it stir us up to commit our souls unto him? especially if we consider that in him we *live*, and *move*, and have our *being*, that there is not the least thought and affection to goodness in us, but it comes from God, *we are* what we are *by his grace*.

Acts 17. 23.

Quest.
Answ.

What is the reason that love descends so much?

Because a man looks upon that which is his *own*, & loves it; now God looks upon us, as upon those into whom he hath infused mercy and goodnesse, and he loves his own work upon us, and therefore having begun a good work, will perfect the same: Doe not men delight to polish their *own* work? As in the first creation God never took off his hand till he had finished his work; so in the second creation of our *souls*, he will never remove his hand from the blessed work of *grace*, till he hath perfected the same; therefore we may well commit our *souls* to him.

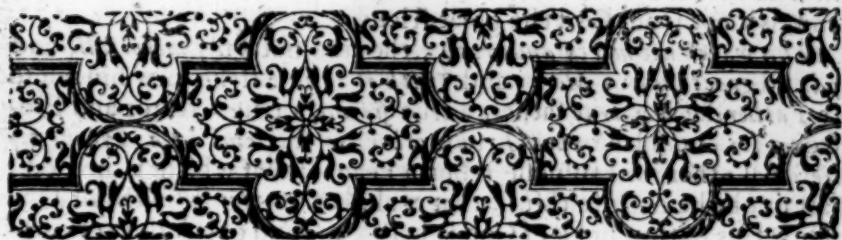
But suppose a man be in a desperat estate, & hath no way of escaping.

Object.
Answ.

Remember that God is the *same* still, he hath not forgot his old Art of *creating*, but is as able to help now as ever, & can *create comforts* for thee in thy greatest troubles, as in the *first* creation he made *light* out of *darknesse*, order out of confusion; so still he is able out of thy confused & perplexed estate, to create *peace* and comfort: Thou knowest not what to doe perhaps, thy mind is so troubled and disquieted; why, commit thy soule to God, he can raise an excellent frame out of the *Chaos* of thy thoughts, therefore be not dismayed, consider thou hast God in

covenant with thee, and hast to deal with an Almighty Creator, who can send present help in time of need. Dost thou want any grace? dost thou want spirituall life? go to this *Creator*, he will put a new life into thee; *he* that made all things of *nothing*, can raise light out of thy dark mind, and can make *fleshy* thy *stony heart*, though it be as hard as a *rocke*; Therefore never despaire, but frequent the means of grace, and still think of God under this relation of a *Creator*, and when he hath begun any good work of grace in thee, go confidently to his Majesty, and desire him to promote and increase the same in thy heart and life; Lord I am thy poor creature, thou hast in mercy begun a blessed work in me, and where thou hast begun, thou hast said thou wilt make an *end*: When thou createdst the *world*, thou didst not leave it till all was done; and when thou createdst *man* thou madest an *end*; Now I beseech thee perfect the *new creature* in my soul: as thou hast begun to enlighten mine *understanding*, and to direct my *affections* to the best things; so I commit my soule unto thee for further guidance and direction to full happinesse.

THE



THE SAINTS HIDING-PLACE.

SERM. XVI.

1 PET. 4. 19.

Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit their soules to him in well-doing, as to a faithfull Creator.



AM at this time to treat of that other Attribute of God, which should move us to trust in him, *namely*, as he is a faithfull *Creator*. Now God is faithfull, 1. In his *nature*, He is, I AM, alwayes like himselfe; *immutable* and *unchangeable*. 2. In his *word*; He expresseth himselfe as he *is*; the word that comes from God is an expression of the faithfulness of his *nature*. 3. In his *works*; Thou art good, and dost good, as the Psalmist saith. God being faithfull in himself, all must needs be so that proceeds from him; whatsoever *Relation* God takes upon him, he is faithfull therein; As he is a *Creator*, so he preserves and maintains his own work; as he is a *Father*, he is faithfull in discharging that duty to the full, for his childrens good; as he is our *friend*, he likewise performs all the duties of that *Relation*. And why doth God stoop so low to take these *Relation*. upon him, but onely to shew that he will certainly accomplish the same to the utmost: Whence is it that men are faithful in their *Relati-*

ons

ons one towards another that the *father* is faithful to his *child*; is it not from God the *chief* Father? That a friend should be faithful to his friend, is it not from God the great friend?

Psal. 25. 10.

All his wayes are mercy and truth; they are not only *mercifull*, and *good*, and *gracious*, but *Mercy* and *Truth* it selfe: If he shew himself to be a *Father*, he is a *true* father, a *true* friend, a true Creator and Protector; (as one saith) *Shall I cause others to fear and be a Tyrant my selfe*? All other faithfulness is but a Beam of that which is in God: Shall not he be most faithful, that makes other things faithful?

Psal. 72.

1 Tim. 1. 15.

Now this faithfulness of God is here a ground of this duty of committing our selves to him, and we may well trust *him*, whose word hath been *seven times tryed in the fire*; there is no dross in it. Every word of God is a sure word, his truth is a *Shield* and *Buckler*, we may well trust in it; therefore when you reade of any singular promise in the New Testament, it is said, *This is a faithful saying*; (that is) this is such a speech as we may trust to; it is the speech of a *faithfull Creator*.

Considering therefore that God is so *faithfull* every way in his *promises*, and in his *deeds*, let us make especiall use of it: Treasure up all the promises we can, of the *forgiveness* of *sins*, of *protection* and *preservation*, that he will never leave us, but be *our God to death*, &c. and then consider withall, that he is faithful in performing the same: when we are affrighted by his *Majesty* and his *Justice*, and other attributes, then think of his *mercy* and *truth*; *He hath clothed himself with faithfulness*, (as the Psalmist saith); In all the unfaithfulness of men whom thou trustest, depend upon this, that God is still the same, and will not deceive thee.

When we have mans word, we have his sufficiency in mind; for mens words are as *themselves* are. What will not the word of a King do? If a man be mighty and great, his word is answerable. This is the reason why we should make so much of the *word of God*, because it is the word of *Jehovah*, a mighty Creator, who gives a being to all things, and can only be Lord and master of his Word: we know Gods meaning no otherwise than by his *word*; till we come to the knowledge of *vision* in heaven, we must be content with the knowledge of *Revelation* in the Word.

And in every *promise* single out *that* which best suiteth with thy present condition. If thou art in any great distresse, think upon the Almighty power of God. Lord, thou hast made me of nothing, and canst deliver me out of this estate; behold I flie unto thee for succour, &c. If thou art in perplexity for want of direction, and knowest not what to do, single out the attributes of Gods *wisdom*, & desire him to teach thee the way that thou shouldest goe. If thou art wronged, flie to his *Justice*, and say, *Oh God, to whom vengeance belongeth, bear and help thy servant*. If thou be surprized with *distrust* and staggering, then goe to his *truth* and faithfulness; thou shalt alwayes finde in God something to support thy soul in the greatest extremity that can befall thee; for if there were not in God a *fulness* to supply every exigent that we are in, he were not to be worshipped, he were not to be trusted.

Man

Man is lighter than vanity in the Ballance; Every man is a *lyar*, that is, he is *false*: we may be *so* and yet be *men* too, but God is essentially *true*, he cannot deceive and be God too; Therefore ever when thou art disappointed with men, retire to God and to his promises, & build upon this, that the Lord will not be wanting in any thing may do thee good. With men there is breach of covenant, Nation with Nation, and man with man; there is little trust to be had in any, but in all confusions *here* is comfort. A religious person may cast himself boldly into the arms of the Almighty, and goe to him in any distresse, as to a *faithfull* Creator, that will not forsake him.

Oh let us be ashamed that we should dishonour him, who is ready to pawn his faithfulness and truth for us; *If we confesse our sinnes, God is faithfull to forgive them*; he will not suffer us to be tempted *above that which we are able*. When we perplex our selves with doubts and fears, whether he will make good his promise or not, we disable his Majesty. Do we not think God stands upon his truth and faithfulness? undoubtedly he doth, and we cannot dishonour him more, than to distrust him, especially in his Evangelical promises; we make him a *lyar*, and rob him of *that* which he most glories in, (his *Mercy and Faithfulness*) if we rest not securely upon him.

V/c.

See the baseness of mans nature, God hath made all other things *faithfull* that are so, and we can trust them, but are ever and anon questioning the truth of his promise. We may justly take up *Salvians* complaint in his time, *Who hath made the earth faithfull to bring forth fruit* (saith he) *but God?* yet we can trust the ground with sowing our seed: *Who makes man faithfull* (who is by nature the most slippery and unconstant creature of all other) *but God onely?* yet we can trust a vaine man, whose breath is in his nostrils, and look for great matters at his hands, before an *All-sufficient* God, that changeth not: *Who makes the seas and the winds faithfull that they doe not hurt us, but God?* and yet we are apt to trust the winde and weather sooner than God: as we see many *seamen* that will thrust forth their goods into the wide Ocean, in a small Bark, to shift any way, rather than trust God with them.

Yea, let *Satan* by his wicked Instruments draw a man to some cursed politique reasons, (for the Devill doth not immediately converse with the world, but in his instruments) and he will sooner trust *him* than God himself: so prone are our hearts to distrust the Almighty, to call his truth in question, and to trust the lyes of our own hearts and other mens, before *him*. Let us therefore lament our infidelity, that having such an omnipotent and faithfull Creator to relie upon, yet we cannot bring our hearts to trust in him. There are two main *Pillars* of a Christians faith.

1. *The power of God.*
2. *The goodnesse of God.*

These two like *Aaron* and *Hur*, hold up the arms of our prayers. Let our estate be never so desperate, yet God is *Creator* still; let our sins and infirmities be never so great, yet he hath power to heal them: Oh how

how should this chear up our souls, and support our drooping spirits in all our strivings and conflicts with *sin* and *Satan*, that we yeeld not to the least temptation, having such an Almighty God to flye unto for succour.

Jeremy.
We must not
trust the crea-
ture.

Curst is that man that makes flesh his arm; he that we trust in must be no lesse than a *Creator*, *Cease from man whose breath is in his nostrils*, (saith God) he is a poor *creature*, as thy self is, raised of nothing, and shall come to dust again: If we would be *trusting* as we needs must, (for we are dependant persons, and want many things whilst we are here) let us go to the *fountain*, and not to *broken Cisterns* for comfort.

It is no small priviledge for a Christian to have this free access to God in times of extremity; be we what we can be, take us at our worst in regard of sin or misery, yet we are his *Creatures* still; I am the clay, Lord, thou art the *Pottery*; I am a sinfull wretch, yet I am the workmanship of thy hands; thou hast framed me, and fashioned me, O God. No wicked person in the world can upon good ground plead in this manner, though they may say to God, *I am thy creature*, yet they have not the grace in their troubles to plead this unto him. Why Lord, though I be a rebellious son, and am not worthy to be called thy servant, yet *I am thy creature*, though a sinfull one. Surely had we *faith*, we would take hold by a little. The soule of man is like the *Vine*, it winds about and fastens upon every little help; *faith* will see day at a little hole, and where it sees any thing, it will catch it; as the *woman of Canaan*, Christ calls her *Dog*; why, be it so, Lord, *I am a dog*, yet I am one of the family, though I be a *Dog*; therefore *have mercy on me*.

Oh, it is a sweet reasoning, thus to cling about God, and gather upon him; it is a speciall art of *faith*. Though a carnall man may reason thus, as having ground from the truth of the thing) yet he hath not grace to reason out of an affection thereunto; though he should say, *Lord, I am thy creature*; yet his heart tells him thus, (if he would hearken to it) *I am thy creature, Lord*, but I have made all my members that I have received from thee, instruments to sin against thee, and I purpose not to reforme: My *tongue* is an instrument of swearing, lying, and profane speeches; my *hands* are instruments of bribery and violence, continually working mischief in thy sight; my *feet* carry me to such and such filthy places, and abominable courses; mine own heart tells me that I fight against thee my *Creator*, with those very limbs and weapons which thou hast given me. Beloved, the conscience of this so stifles the voice of a wilfull sinner, that (notwithstanding he acknowledgeth himselfe to be Gods creature: yet) he cannot with any comfort plead for mercy at his hand in times of distresse.

But to a right godly man this is an argument of speciall use & consequence; in the midst of troubles he may alledge this, and it binds God to help him. We see *great ones* when they raise any, (though perhaps there is little merit in them, yet) they call them their *Creatures*, and this is a moving argument with such to polish their own work still, and not to desett them: wil it not be a prevailing argument with God then, for

a Christian to plead with him? Lord, thou hast raised me out of nothing, yea, out of a state worse than nothing; I am thy poor *creature*, forsake not the work of thine own hands. We may see what a fearfull thing *sin* is in Gods eye, that the works of *our hands*, should make God depart from the worke of *his hands*, as he will certainly doe at the day of judgement, *Depart you cursed, &c.* though we be his *creatures*, yet because we have not used those gifts and abilities which he hath given us to serve his Majesty, he will not indure the sight of us in that day.

But that you may the better practice this *duty* of committing your souls to God, take these directions.

First, see that thou be thy own man, it is an act of persons *free to covenant*; our souls must be *ours* before we can commit them to God. Naturally we are all slaves to *Satan*, the *strong man* hath possession of us, and therefore our first care must be to get out of his *bondage*; to which purpose we should much eye the sweet promises and invitations of the Gospel, alluring us to accept of mercy and deliverance from sin and death, as, *Come unto me all you that are weary & heavy laden, &c.* and so cast the guilt of our soules upon God to *pardon* first, and then to *sanctifie* and *cleanse*, that we may no more *return to folly*, but lead an unspotted life before him for the time to come.

Directions
how to com-
mit our souls
to God.
1

It is therefore a silly course and dangerous, which poor worldly wretches take, who think *Lord have mercy upon them* will serve their turne, and that God will certainly save their souls, when as they were never yet in the state of *grace* or *reconciliation* with him, nor never had any *divorce* made between them and their sins, and consequently never any *league* between God and their souls to this day.

Beloved, when once a man hath alienated his soul from God by sin, he hath *then* no more command of it, for the present it is quite out of his power; Now when we would commit our souls to God aright, we must first commit them to him to pardon the guilt of sin in them; when this is done, God will give us our souls againe, and then they may truly be said to be our own, and not before. It is the happinesse of a Christian that he is not his *own*, but that whether he *live* or *die* he is the *Lords*.

In the second place, *We must labour to finde our selves in Covenant with God*; that is, *to find him making good his promises to us; and our selves making good our promises to him*; For a man can never comfortably commit himself to God, unlesse he find a disposition in his own heart to be *faithfull* to him againe.

Direction 2.

There is *passive* fidelity, and an *active*. 1. Passive faithfulness is in the things that we give *trust* unto, us, such a one is a sure trusty man, therefore I will rely upon him. 2. Active faithfulness in the soul, is, when we cast our selves upon a man that is trusty, & depend upon him the more a man knowes another to be *faithfull*, the more faithfull he will be in trusting of him: & thus we must trust God if ever we expect any good at his hands: and our dependance on *him* binds him to be the more faithfull to us. He is counted a wicked man *indeed* that will deceive the trust committed to him; *Trust* begets fidelity it makes a good

good man the more *faithfull*, when he knowes he is *trusted*.

Jer. 10. 23.

Learn therefore to know thy self to be in covenant with God, and to trust him with all thou hast; traine up thy selfe in a continuall dependance upon him. He that trusts God with his *soule*, will trust him every day, in every thing he hath or doth; he knows well, that whatsoever he enjoys is not his own, but Gods; and this stirs him up to commit all his wayes and doings to his protection, esteeming nothing safe but what the Lord keeps; He sees *it is not in sinful man to direct his own steps*, and therefore resignes up his *estate*, his *calling*, his *family*, whatsoever is neare and deare unto him to the blessed guidance and direction of the Almighty: Oh (thinks he) that I were in Covenant with God, that he would own me for his, and take the care of me, how happy should my condition *then* be?

He will likewise commit the *Church* and *State* wherein he lives, to God, and strengthens his faith daily, by observing Gods faithfull dealing with his people in every kind.

It is a thing very behovefull for Christians thus to inure themselves to be acquainted with God by little and little, first trusting him with smaller matters, and then with greater: how can a man trust God with his soul, that distrusts him for the petty things of this life? *They that give to the poore are said to lend unto the Lord*; and, *If we cast our bread upon the waters, we shall find it again*. Now he that parts with any thing to relieve a poore Saint, and will not trust God with his promise to recompence it againe, but thinks all is gone, and he shall never see it more, exceedingly derogates from the truth and goodnesse of the Almighty, who hath promised to return with advantage whatsoever we give that way; God hath secret wayes of his own to do us good, that we know not of. A man is never the poorer for that which he discreetly gives; It is hard to beleve this, but it is much harder for a man to commit his soul to God, when he dyes; with assurance, that he shall partake of mercy, and be saved at the last day.

Direction 3.

Again, Take heed of those *evill* and *curst* dispositions, that hinder us from the performance of this duty; as namely, *carnall wit* and *policy*, and *carnall will*, and *affection*, &c. There is a great deal of selfe-denyall to be learned, before we can go out of our selves, and commit all to God; ere we can cast our selves into his armes, and lay our selves at his feet: therefore take heed that we be not ruled, either by our own carnal policy or others, to knit our selves to that: for I beseech you do but think (what is true in all Stories, not only in the Scripture, but elsewhere) the most unfortunate men that ever were (otherwise wise enough) were alwayes too confident of themselves: The greatest Swimmers you know are often drowned, because relying overmuch on their own skill, they cast themselves into danger, & are swallowed up of the deep; Even confidence in wit is usually unfortunate, though it be great; let *solomon* be an example, you see how he strengthned himself by carnal supports; but what became of all? alas, it soon vanished and came to nothing; the *Jews* would run to the reed of Egypt, and that ran into their hands in stead

stead of helping it hurt them. God takes delight to overthrow the ripeness of all the carnall policy of man, that advanceth it selfe against his word and wayes. Take heed of confidence in prosperity, in wit, in strength; take heed of whatsoever hinders the committing of our soules to God, and still remember, that *honesty is the best policy*, and that God reconciled in Christ is the best Sanctuary to flee unto; *The name of God is a strong Tower*, (saith Solomon) *the righteous flee thereto and are safe*.

Let Christians therefore have nothing to doe with carnall shifts and politique ends, for they have a strong *Rock*, and a sure hold to goe to, the *Almighty* is their *shield*. Beloved, God will be honoured by our trusting of him, and those that will be wiser than God, and have other courses distinct and contrary to him, must looke for confusion in all their plots. A Christian should thus think with himselfe, Let God be wise for me, his wisdom shall be my direction, his will shall be the rule of my life; he shall guide me and support me, I will adventure upon no course that I dare not commit my soul with comfort to God in.

That Carnall
Policy hinders
our safety.

Oh, if we tender our own welfare, and the inward peace of our soules, let us shun all unwarrantable courses, &c adventure upon no action whatsoever, wherein we cannot upon good grounds desire the Lords protection: It is a fearefull estate for a man to undertake such courses, as that he cannot if he were surpris'd by judgement, suddenly commit himselfe to God in; The throne of iniquity shall not abide with God, he will not take a wicked man by the hand, nor owne him in a distressefull time.

Study therefore I beseech you to be alwayes in such a blessed condition, as that you may (without tempting of God) in a holy boldnesse of faith resigne up your soules to him. A guilty conscience cannot seek the Lord, naturally it runs away from him; peace is not easily gotten, nor the gapp soone made up; therefore preserve *conscience* cleare and unspotted, if thou wouldst have God thy refuge in time of need. *Adam* when he had sinned, ran from God; *Peter*, (when our *Saviour* discovered more than an ordinary Majesty in his miracles) said, *Lord, depart from me, I am a sinfull man*; It is the work of flesh and bloud to depart from God, but when a man goes to God, it is a signe he hath more than flesh and bloud in him, for this cannot be done without a supernaturall work of faith, which alone will make a sinfull conscience flie to God, and look to him as a Father in Christ, and desire him by his Almighty power, whereby he created *heaven* and *earth*, to create faith in the soule. And when thou hast cast thy soule into the armes of the Almighty, labour to settle it there; and to quiet thy selfe in the discharge of thy duty, say thus, Now I have done that which belongs to me, let God do that which belongs to him; I will not trouble my self about Gods work, but in well doing commit my soul to him, and let him alone with the rest.

Christians should not out-run Gods Providence, and say, *What shall become of me, this trouble will overwhelm me, this affliction will surely under me*, but serve divine Providence, in the use of the meanes, and then leave all to his disposall. Especially this duty is needfull in the hour of death, or when some imminent danger approacheth, but then it

will be an hard worke, except it be practiced aforehand.

Direction 4.

Labour therefore for assurance of Gods love betimes, get infallible evidences of thy estate in grace, that thou art a renewed person, and that theres a through-change wrought in thy heart, that God hath set a stamp upon thee for his own, and that thou hast something above nature in thee; then maist thou cheerfully say, *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit; I am thine, Lord save me, &c.* otherwise having no interest in God, how canst thou expect any favour from him? Oh the sweet tranquillity and heaven upon earth which those enjoy who have God to be their friend!

Luke 23. 46.

This layes a heavy prejudice upon *Antichristian Religion*, which maintaines a *doctrine of doubting*, affirming that we ought not to labour for assurance of Gods favour. Oh beloved, what deprives a poor Christian soule of comfort more than this? Alas, how can a man at the hour of death commit his soul into the hands of Almighty God, that staggers whether he be his child or no? and knowes not whether he shall goe to heaven or hell? Therefore it should be our daily indeavour, as we would have comfort in the time of resigning and giving up our soules to God, to gather evidences of a good estate, that we are in covenant with him, that he is our Father, and that we are his children in Christ Jesus.

For will a man trust his Jewels with an enemy, or with a doubtful friend? how can the swearer commit his soul to God? how can loose livers and your filthy unclean wretches that live in continuall enmity against the Lord, commit themselves with any comfort unto him? They pray, *Leade us not into temptation*, and yet run daily into temptations, into vile houses and places of wickednesse, wherein they feede their corruptions, and nothing else: They say, *Give us this day our daily bread*, and yet use unwarrantable courses, seeking to thrive by unlawfull meanes.

Certaine it is, a man can commit his soule with no more comfort to God, than he hath care to please him. If a man knows such a one hath his evidences and Leases, and may hurt him when he list, how carefull will he be of provoking or giving offence to such a man? Suppose we knew a man that had the keeping of a Lyon, or some cruell beast, & could let it loose upon us at his pleasure, would we not speak such a one fair, and give him as little cause of discontent as may be? Beloved, God hath devils and wicked men in a chaine, and can, if we offend him, set loose all the powers of darknesse upon us every moment, he can make *Conscience* fly in our faces, and cause us to *despaire* and *sinke*. All our evidences & assurances of salvation are in Gods hands, he can bring us into a state full of discomfort and misery, and make us in a manner to feele the very flashes & scorplings of hell it self: Oh who would offend this God, much lesse live in the practice of any sin, and yet think of committing their soules to him!

Direction 5.
Psal. 71. 6. 9.
17, 18.

To incourage you the more to trust in God, observe the constant course of his dealing towards you. *Lord, thou hast beene my God from my youth, (saith David) upon thee have I hung ever since I was taken out of my mothers womb, forsake me not in my gray haire, when my strength faileth me.*

We

We should gather upon God (as it were) from former experience of his goodnesse, and trust him for the time to come, having formerly found him true. Beloved, it is good to lay up all the experiments of Gods love we can, that we may trust him at the houre of death, for all our strength then will be little enough to uphold our faith, when many troubles shall meet in one (as it were in a Center) then a world of feares and distractions will seize upon our soules, the guilt of sinne past, thoughts of judgement to come, forsaking of our former lusts and delights, trouble of mind, pain of body, &c. We have need of much acquaintance with God, and assurance of his love at such a time; Therefore let us learn daily to observe the experience of his goodnesse towards us, how when we have committed our selves to him in youth, he hath been a God from time to time in such and such dangers to us. Ancient Christians should be the best Christians, because they are enriched with most experiences: It is a shame for ancient Christians to stagger, when they yeeld up their soules to God, as if they had not been acquainted with him heretofore. You see how David pleads to God, *Thou hast redeemed me*; he goes to former experience of his mercy, *therefore now into thy hands I commend my spirit in this extremity*. This Psalm is a practice of this precept; here is the Precept, *Commit your soules to God, as to a faithfull Creator*; here is the practice of David, *Into thy hands I commend my spirit, for thou hast redeemed me O Lord God of truth, &c.* Therefore I beseech you let us treasure up experience of Gods goodnesse, that so when extremities shall come, we may goe boldly to him upon former acquaintance with his Majesty; and being strengthened with former experience, I beseech you let us labour to practice these and the like rules prescribed, to incourage us in the performance of so necessary a duty.

Ps. 31. 5

But will not God keepe us without we commit our selves unto him?

Object.

I answer; God having indued us with *understanding and grace*, will do us good in the exercise of those powers and graces that he hath given us he will preserve us, but we must pray for it; Christ himselfe must aske before he can have: *Aske of me and I will give thee the Heathen for thine inheritance*, &c. we should therefore make it a continued act, every day of our lives to commit all we have to the Lords disposal; and to that end observe how he dischargeth the trust committed to him upon all occasions, how faithfull he is in delivering his poor Church in greatest extremities, and our selves also in our worst times; *Thou never failest those that trust in thee*, (saith David) and, *How excellent is thy loving kindnesse, O God, therefore the children of men shall trust under the shadow of thy wings*. Daily experience of Gods loving kindnesse will make us daily to trust under the shadow of his wings. It should therefore be our continuall course to observe the goodnesse, kindnesse, faithfulness, and other Attributes of God, and often to support our soules with them.

Answ.

That to be kept we must commit our souls to God. Psal. 2. 8.

Psal. 36. 7.

Think, I beseech you, how he numbers the very bones of men, they are all written in his book of providence; he knowes every joynt, every part which he hath made; he knows his owne workmanship; therefore we may well commit our souls to him. Doth God number our super-

fluities; and not our natural and essentiall parts? Even our very haire are numbred, our *tears* are taken notice of, and put into his *Bottle*; our *steps* are told, our *desires* are known, our *groans* are not hid, we shall not lose a sigh for sin, so particular is Gods providence; he watcheth continually over us; there is not any of our members but they are all written in his Book, so that he will not suffer *a bone to be broken*: We should therefore daily resigne up our souls to his mercifull tuition, and bind our selves to lead unblameable lives before him, resolving against every sinful course, wherein we would be affraid to look his Majesty in the face; What a comfortable life were the life of Christians, if they would exercise themselves to walk in the presence of the Almighty? This is that which the Scripture speaks of *Enoch*, and the rest, who are said to have walked with God; that is to have committed themselves and their soules to him, as to a faithfull Creator.

Psal. 34. 20.

Gen. 5. 24.

Objct.
Of wicked
mens prefer-
ring, who do
not commit
their souls to
God.

Answ.

1

Pl. 37. 13. 38.

2

It may be objected, Here is a great deal of labour and striving against corruptions indeed, may not a man walke with God without all this ado? we see wicked men that never commit their souls to God, grow fat and lusty, and have as good successe in the world as the strictest men that are.

I answer, God many times preserves such wretches, but alas, that preservation is rather a reservation for a worse evil to come upon them, *There is a pit a digging for the wicked*; he flourisheth and bears out all impudently, under hope of successe, but his grave is a making, and his present prosperity will but aggravate his future misery.

Sometimes God preserves wicked men for other ends; it may be he hath some to come of their loynes, who of *wicked* shall be made good.

3

Again, God will be in no mans debt, those that are *civilly* good shall have *civill prosperity*, as the *Romans* had, they had a common-wealth well governed, and they prospered many years together, as *Austin* observes; God preserves wicked men from many calamities, he gives them *civill wisdom*, good *carriage*, &c. and answerable to those common gifts, he gives them preservation and protection, but then there is vengeance on their soules the while. Those that commit not themselves carefully and watchfully to God, have dead secure soules, without any life of grace, or power of godlinesse in them. I speak this to waking Christians, that would know in what case they should live, walking in the sense and assurance of Gods love; they (I say) ought to practice this duty of committing the keeping of their soules to God in well doing, as to a faithfull Creator.

What it is to
commit our
souls to God.

Neither is it so easie a matter to commit our souls to God, as many fondly imagine; it is not the mumbling over a few prayers, saying, *Lord receive my soul*, &c. will serve the turn; these are good words indeed, and soon learned, but alas who cannot doe this? Our study therefore should be to know the depth and meaning of the same, how that we are not only to commit the essence of our soules to God, that he would take them into heaven when we die, but also to commit the affections of our souls to him, that he might owne us and governe us whilest we live; for
how

how are our soules knowne, but by those active expressions in our affections; which immediately issue from them? when we commit all our thoughts, desires and affections to him, setting him highest in our souls, and making him our hope, our trust, our joy, our feare, &c.

Thus I have spoken of the duty, and of the thing to be committed, our soules; and to whom, to God, and the manner, in well doing; and why, because he is a faithfull Creator.

Now I beseech you consider how nearly it concerns us all to be thoroughly acquainted with the practice of this duty; God knows what extremities we may fall into; certainly in what condition soever we be either publick or private, whether in contagion and infection, or war & desolation, happy are we if we have a God to goe to; if we have him to retire to in Heaven, and a good conscience to retire to in our selves, we may rest secure; *Though the earth be removed, and the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea, yet we shall be safe:* (that is) Though the order of nature were confounded, yet there is a river shall refresh the house of God, there are Chambers of divine protection, that the Christian enters into, as the Prophet saith, *Enter into thy Chambers,* and God is his habitation still: If a Christian had no shelter in the world, yet he hath an abiding place in God continually; as God dwels in him, so he dwels in God. Satan and all other the enemies of man must break through God before they can come to us, when once we commit our selves to him, as to a Tower and habitation, and enter into him as into an hiding place, the enemies must wrong him before they can hurt us, so blessed an estate it is to be in God, having commended our soules to him, as unto a faithfull Creator

But we see many of Gods deare children (that commit themselves to his care and protection) miscarry, and goe by the worst in the world.

Beloved, it is not so, for when they commit themselves to God, they are under safety, and if he keep them not out of trouble, yet he will preserve them in trouble. *I will be with thee in the fire, and in the water,* (saith God:) he saith not, *I will keep you out of the fire, and out of the water,* for he brought many holy Martyrs into it, some were drowned, some burned &c. Though God will not keep us out of trouble, yet he will preserve our spirits in trouble; nay, God many times by a small trouble preserves us from a greater; Even the sufferings of the godly are oft preservations to them; Was not *Jonah* preserved by the Whale? What had become of him if that had not swallowed him up? A Whale that one would have thought should be a meanes to destroy him, was a meanes to carry him to the Coast, and bring him safely to land.

Againe, God seemes for a time indeed to neglect his children when they commit themselves unto him, but marke the issue; *All the workes of God are beautifull in their season;* he suffers them it may be, a long time to be in danger and trouble, till he hath perfected the worke of mortification in their hearts, and crucified their confidence in earthly things, till he hath made them more sensible of the evill of sin, and watchful against it: but wait a while and you shall see, that the end of the righteous man is peace.

Agood T

A a 3

Gods

Objct.

Ans.

I

Plal 40.

Plal 37.

Gods presence and assistance to support his children in trouble is invincible, they have gladnesse and comfort that we wrote not of; they commit the safety of their soules to God, and he seems to neglect them, if we look to their outward man, but they have a *Paradise* in their conscience, God preserves their soules from sin, and their consciences from despair, they have an invinsible protection. There was a tence about *Job* that the Devils saw, and a guard of Angels that *Elias* saw, and that his servants saw afterwards. Wicked men see not the guard of spirits that is about the children of God, (as Christ saith) *they have meat the world knows not of*; they feed on hidden comforts.

As for carnall men that do not commit themselves to God, they have no preservation, but rather a reservation to a further evill: *Pharoah* was kept from the ten plagues, but was drowned in the sea at last; and *Sodom* was kept by *Abraham*, he fought for them, but yet it was destroyed with fire and brimstone afterwards.

Let us then try our trust in God: those that intend to imbarke themselves and their estates in a *ship*, will be sure to try it first; This committing of our souls to God, must be our *ship* to carry us through the waves of this troublesome world, to the heavenly *Canaan* of rest and peace: We should therefore search & prove the same, whether it be indeed safe and sound, able to support our souls in the evill day, and not leak and prove insufficient for us.

How to know
when we trust
God aright.
1. Triall.

Those that commit themselves to God aright, are far from *tempting* his Majesty: God will be *trusted*, but not *tempted*; What though things fall not out according to thy expectation? yet wait thou, & think God hath further ends than thou knowest of: God will do things in the order of his *Providence*, therefore if we neglect *that*, it is our owne fault if he doe not help us. If Christ had committed his health to God, and had cast himselfe downe from the Pinnacle, what an act had this beene? but he would not so tempt the Almighty. Neither should we unadvisedly run into dangers, but serve his Providence upon all occasions; God useth our endeavors to this very end; He saves us not alway *immediately*, but by putting wisdom into our hearts to use lawfull means, and using those means he will save us in them. A Christian therefore should be in a continuall dependance upon God, and say, I will use these means, God may blesse them, if not, I will trust him; he is not tyed to the use of means, though I be.

2. Triall.

Again, those that commit their soules, or any thing to God, find themselves quieted therein; Is it not so amongst men? If a man commit a *jewel* to a trusty friend, is he not secure presently? Have we not Gods Word and faithfulness engaged, that he will not leave us nor forsake us, but continue our All-sufficient God and portion to our lives end? why then are we disquieted? Those that are full of cares and feares may talk their pleasure, but they never yet had any true confidence in God; for faith is a quieting grace, it stills the soule; *Being justified by faith we have peace with God*. Those that are hurried in their life with false doubts and perplexities, *What shall become of me? what shall I eat? & what shall I drink, &c?*

Though

Though they use lawfull meanes; yet commit not themselves to God as they should; for where there is a dependance upon God in the use of meanes, there is an holy silence in the party; All stubborn and tumultuous thoughts are hushed in him; *My soule keep silence to the Lord* (saith *Psalm. 42:* David) and *trust in God why art thou so vexed within me?* Still there is a quieting of the soule where there is trust. Can that man put confidence in God, that prowles for himself, and thinks he hath no Father in heaven to provide for him? Doth that child trust his Father, that (besides going to schoole) thinks what he shall put on? how he shall be provided for, and what an inheritance he shall have hereafter? Alas, this is the Father's care, and belongs not to him; Wheresoever these distractions are, there can be no yeelding up of the soul to God in truth.

There be two *affections* which mightily disturbe the peace of Christians. 1. *Sinfull cares*, and 2. *Sinfull feares*; to both which we have remedies prescribed in the Scripture. 1. *Feare not little flock* (saith Christ) *for it is your Fathers will to give you a Kingdome*: As if he had said, Will not he that gives you heaven, give you other things? *In nothing be carefull*, *Phil. 4.* (saith the Apostle) that is, in a distracting manner, but do your duty, & then let your requests be made known to God, and the peace of God shall keepe you; and therefore were we redeemed from the hands of our enemies, that we might serve him without fear all our days.

A Christian should keepe an inward Sabbath in his soul, and go quietly on in doing all the good he can: what a fearefull thing is it to see men lie groveling in the earth, and live without God in the world, troubling & turmoysing themselves how to compass this thing and that thing, as if they had no God to seek unto, nor no promise to rely upon?

Again, where this committing of a mans self and his soule to God is, *3. Trial.* there will be a looking to God onely in all a man doth, not fearing any danger or opposition that may befall him from without; as the three yong men said to Nebuchadnezar, *our God can keep us if he will*; But what if he will not? *Tet know O King, that we will not worship nor fall downe before thy Image*: So it is with a Christian foreseeing some danger, disgrace or displeasure of this or that man which may befall him, he resolveth notwithstanding in despite of all, to commit himself to God in doing his duty, come what will, whether God will save him or no, he will not break the peace of his conscience, or doe the least evill; he is no fool, but foresees what may befall him for well doing; this inconvenience may come, and that trouble, yet he sets light by these; he hath an eye to heaven, and sees more good to himselfe in the Creator that gave him his being of nothing; and more good for the time to come (that will make him a blessed Saint in heaven) than there can be ill in the creature: therefore come what can come, his heart is fixed to trust the Lord, and rather than he will displease him, desert his honour and his cause, or doe any unworthy action; he will commit himselfe to God in the greatest dangers.

The ground hereof is this; *A Christian is the wisest man in the world*, and he understands well enough that God is *All-sufficient*; he sees there is a greater good in God than he can have in the Creature, and counts it *madnesse* Reason of trusting in God.

madnesse to offend God to please the creature, because there is a greater evill to be expected from God, than from the Creature, though it were the greatest Monarch in the world, considering therefore that he hath his best good in his union with God, and in keeping his peace with him, he will not break with him for any Creature. And thus he doth wisely, for he knowes, if he loose his life he shall have a better life of God than he hath in his body: for God is his life, God is his soule and his comfort, and he hath his being from God, he is his *Creator*, and he hath a better being in God when he dyes, than he had when he lived: for our being in God makes us happy, and therefore Christ saith, *He that loves his life before God and a good cause, hates it:* and *he that hates his life* when Christ calls for it, *loves it*, for he hath a better life in *him*; we give nothing to God, but he returnes it a thousand times better than we gave it. Let us yeeld our lives to him, we shall have them in heaven if they be taken away on earth. He will give us our goods a thousand fold, we shall have more favour in God than in any Creature, & therefore a Christian out of this ground commits himself to God, though he foresee never so much danger like to fall upon him.

4. Triall.

Again, if we do in deed and not in *pretence* commit our selves to God, as to a faithfull Creator, we will not limit his Majesty, as many carnall hearts doe: oh if God will do so and so for them, then they would trust him: If they had but so much to live on a yeare, and such comings in, then they would depend upon God: but they must have a pawn, and so much in hand first. What a shame is it that we should trust the vilest man in the world as far as we see him, and yet unlesse we have somewhat to leane on, we will not trust God? Beloved, when a man limits God in any thing, such a one may talk, but he trusts him not at all. Indeed we should indent with God, and tie him to look to the salvation of our soules, but for other things leave them to his own wisdom, both for the *time*, for the *manner* and *measure*, doe what he will with us: Suppose it come to the *Crosse*, hath he not done greater matters for us? why then should we distrust him in lesser? If times come that Religion flourish or goes downward, yet relye on him still: hath he not given his Son to us, and will he not give heaven also? Why do we limit the holy One of Israel, and not cast our selves upon him, except he will covenant to deale thus and thus with us?

A true Christian hath his eye alwayes heaven-ward, and thinkes nothing to good for God: O Lord, (saith he) of thee I have received this *estate*, this *credit* and reputation in the world: I have what I have, and am what I am of thee, and therefore I yeeld all to thee back againe: If thou wilt serve thy selfe of my *wealth*, of my *selfe*, of my *strength*, thou shalt have it: If thou wilt serve thy selfe of my credit and reputation, I will adventure it for thee: If thou wilt have my life, of thee I had it, to thee I will restore it, I will not limit thy Majesty, come of it what will, I leave it to thy wisdom, use me and mine as thou wilt, onely be gracious to my soule, that it may go well with *that*, and I care not. Thus we should wholly resigne our selves to the Lords disposall, and thereby we shall exceedingly

exceedingly honour his Majesty, and cause him to honour us, & to shew his presence to us for our good, which he will assuredly doe, if we absolutely yeeld up our selves to him. But if a man will have two strings to his Bow, and trust him so far, but not so far, so he may be kept from this danger of that trouble, &c. this is not to deale with God as an Omnipotent Creator: For he that doth a thing truly in obedience to God, will doe it generally to all his commands; so far as the reason of his obedience reaches, so far our trust should extend; he that commits any thing to God, will commit all to him: he chooseth not his objects: but upon the same ground that he commits his soul to God when he dies, he commits his estate, liberty, and all he hath while he lives: He can never rely on God for greater matters, that distrusts him in lesser.

Again, a man that truly trusts God, will commit all his wayes unto him; he will take no course but what he is guided in by the Lord; he looks for wisdom from above, and saith, Lord, it is not in me to guide my owne way: but as thy Word shall leade me, and the good counsell of thy Spirit in others direct me, so I will follow thee. He that commits not his wayes to God, will not commit his comforts to him; God must be our Counsellor as well as our Comforter. Therefore the Wise man bids us, *Acknowledge God in all our wayes, and leane not to our owne wisdom.* Most men looke how safe their counsels are, not how holy and agreeable to God; is this to trust in him? Will God save us at last, and yet suffer us to live as we list now? Deceive not your selves, he that will have his soul saved must commit it to God before hand to be sanctified.

5. Tryall.

Prov. 3.

Again, those that commit themselves aright to God, will commit their posterity to him, their wives and children.

6. Tryall.

Why, do not men make their Wills, and commit their goods to them?

Object.
Sol.

Oh but how do they resigne them? how covetous and full of distrust are they? I must leave such a child so much, and so much, and why I pray you? because God cannot blesse him else; Oh fearfull is God eyed to meanes, cannot he blesse with a little as well as with a great deal? Is not the earth the Lords, and the fulnesse thereof? Why? must God have so much in hand, or else he cannot enrich and raise up thy children? Oh consider, he hath declared himselfe to be the father of the fatherlesse, and looks to the Widow in a special manner, he doubles his Providence to her; he provides for all, but takes speciall notice of them: therefore quie thy selfe, they are in covenant with God, and God is thy God, and the God of thy seed also: therefore if thou wilt commit thy soule, why not thy Wife, children, goods, &c.

Looke into the course of Gods people in all times, those that have left but little with honest dealing, God hath blessed the same exceedingly: whereas those that have left great matters ill gotten, instead of a blessing have often left a curse, and a snare behind them. Why then should men take indirect courses, and wound their consciences for worldly pelfe?

Confid. 1.

Consider, 1. thy children are Gods & not thine: he gave them to thee at first, and he can provide for them hereafter when thou art gone: thou art the father of their body, but he is the father of their soules.

2. God

2. God provided for them before they were borne; doth not he plant love and affection in the Mothers heart? doth not he provide suck in the Mothers breasts? and do we think he will not care for them now they are borne, as well as he did before they came into the world? it is Atheisme to think such a thought. Those that commit themselves to God in one thing, will doe so in all things, otherwise they deceive their owne soules; for it is an universall Act, that runs through their whole life. *Committing* is an Action of *trust*, and there is a kinde of entercourse of *trust* betwene God and a Christian continually.

7. Tryall.

Lastly, those that commit themselves to God will be faithfull stewards in whatsoever he hath trusted them withall. Thou committest thy selfe, and thy health, and estate to God; and at length thou wilt commit thy soul when thou diest unto him; very well; but what doth God trust thee withall? hath he not trusted thee with a *body* and a *soul*, with a portion of *goods*, with *place*, *time*, *strength* and *abilities* to doe good? Hast thou not all thou hast from God as a *steward*, to improve for thy Masters advantage? If ever thou expectest the performance of what thou hast put in him be faithfull in that trust which he hath committed to thee. Those that have misused their bodies, and wounded their souls in their live, how can they commit them to God at their deaths? How dares the soule look up to him, when the life hath been nothing else but a perpetuall offending of his Majesty?

I beseech you let us learne this wholesome lesson, great is our benefit thereby: *He that trusts in the Lord shall be as mount Sion, that cannot be moved*; we may be *shaken*, but shall never be *removed*. The earth is shaken with Earthquakes, but the earth keeps its owne Center still: Our best peace is in God, and our chiefest safety in his protection. *I laid me down to rest, because thou Lord watchest over me*, (saith the Prophet) and *Returne O my soule to thy rest, for the Lord hath been very beneficiall to thee*. Is it not a good thing to have a sweet security of soule? that whether I sleep or wake, whether I be at home or abroad, live, or die, I have a Providence watching over me better than mine owne? when I yeeld my self up to God his *wisdom* is mine, his *strength* is mine, whatsoever he hath *it is for me*, because I am his: What a heaven upon earth is this, that a Christian out of a holy familiarity with God, can resigne up his soul to him upon all occasions? Set heaven and salvation aside, what greater happiness can be desired? How sweet is a mans rest at night after he hath yeelded himselfe to God by faithfull prayer?

Use.

Exhortation.

I beseech you let us be acquainted with the practice of this duty, and labour to be in such a state as God may owne us and receive our poore soules to himselfe; Let us keep them pure and undefiled, and labour to improve our Talents, that when we give any thing to God, we may say, *Lord according to the grace I have received, I have kept it, and therefore now returne it to thee againe.*

Beloved, when trouble of conscience comes, when sicknesse and death comes, what will become of a man that hath not this sweet acquaintance with God? he was a stranger to God in the time of *prosperity*, and God

is

is now a stranger to him in *adversity*. *Saul* was a profane spirited man, he did not acquaint himselfe with God in the time of his *happinesse*, and therefore in time of distresse he goes first to the *Witch*, and then to the *sword point*. So fareth it with all wicked wretches in their great extremities; no sooner doth any evill betide them, or the least danger approach them, let conscience never so little fly in their faces, &c. but presently they go to cursed means, and run upon desperate conclusions.

Therefore as we desire to die even in Gods armes, and yeeld up our selves into the very hands of the Almighty with comfort, let us daily inure our selves to to this blessed course of committing our selves and all our wayes to him in doing good.

Come and see, saith the Scripture; Beloved, if you will not beleeeve me, make tryall of this course a while; did you once taste the sweetnesse of it, how would your drooping spirits be cheared up?

Let a man continually keep a good conscience, and he shall be satisfied with peace at last: Suppose he meets with danger and opposition in the world, this may seem harsh at the first; O but he shall know afterwards, what it is to part with any thing for Christs sake, to commit his cause or what soever he hath unto God, as to a faithfull Creator. Then we taste of God to the purpose, when we put him to it; for God will not be indebted us; we never finde such sweet immediate comfort from him, as when we deny our selves comfort of the Creature for his sake.

Little doe we know what times may befall us, there is much danger abroad, and we have cause to feare, not far from us. It may be the clouds even now hang over our heads. Oh if we would be hid in the day of the Lords wrath, and have no evill come nigh our dwellings, let us (above all things in the world) make sure our interest in Christ, and title to the promise; We should seek to know God more, and then we would trust him more. *They that know thy name will trust in thee*, saith David: Oh the blessed estate of a Christian, that now he may be acquainted with God, that through Christ there is a Throne of Grace to flie unto! I beseech you improve this happy priviledge, and then come what will; come *famine*, come danger of *war* or *pestilence*, &c. God will be a Sanctuary and an abiding place to you, A Christian carries his *Rock* and *sure defence* about him; *I will be unto them a little Sanctuary in all places*, saith God. What a comfort is it to have a *wall of fire* still compassing us about? a *Shield* that our enemies must break through before they can come at us? *He that trusts in God shall be recompenced with mercy on every side*; it is no matter what dangers compasse him, though he be in the midst of *death* & *hell*, or any trouble whatsoever, if he commits himselfe to God in obedience, out of good grounds of faith in his Word, he shall be safe in the evill day.

FINIS.

THE LIFE OF FAITH.

In three SERMONS.

WHEREIN IS SHEWED,

What this Life of Faith is; Why Faith hath
so much attributed unto it: And how to live this
glorious Life in all the severall passages
of our Pilgrimage.

By R. S. D. D.



LONDON,

Printed for HENRY CRIPPS, at his Shop
in Popes-head Alley.
1658.

THE LIFE OF FATH.

What this Life of Fath. is; Why Fath. hath
so much admired himself; And how to live this
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of our Pilgrimage.

By R. S. D. D.



LONDON

Printed for Henry Girdle, at his shop
in Roper and Alley
1688.

THE LIFE OF FAITH,

SERM. XVII.

GALATH. 2. 20.

And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.



They are the words of a man pursued by the Law unto Christ proceeding from the Spirit of Christ, the nature whereof is, to apply generals to particulars; so Saint Paul here, *The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God.* He sees he is dead by the Law, therefore he seeks for a better husband. The Law finds him dead, and leaves him dead; thus pursued by the tenor of the Law, he flies to Christ, and sayes, *I am crucified with Christ,* neverthelesse I live; How? yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.

There be three ranks of men in the world, under which all men may be comprehended.

1. *The estate of Nature.*
2. *The estate of men under the spirit of bondage.*
3. *The estate of grace under the Gospel.*

B b 2

This

This is the speech of one of the third rank, or a man awaked by the spirit of bondage, who hath attained to a clear and evident sight of his misery, and of the excellent remedies of a man, who hath attained to a new frame and temper of soule; it is the speech of a person in the state of Grace, who now aspires to a more noble and excellent life. In the words we may consider divers things.

1. That there is another manner of life than the ordinary life of nature.

2. That it is a better and more excellent life than that he formerly lived: (as if he had said) Now since I have seene the misery of my former naturall estate, and the excellencie of a spirituall life by faith in the Son of God, I esteem my former life to have been wretched, not worthy of the name of life compared with that which I live now, as being founded in a better Root than the first *Adam*.

3. The Spring of this life is the Sonne of God; God is life naturally, and we have life no otherwise than from him, who quickneth all things.

4. The conveyance of this spirituall life is by faith; Water Springs not without a Conduit to carry and spread it: The Sunne warms not without beames, and the Liver conveys not bloud without Veines; so faith is that vessell which conveys this spirituall life, that Conduit wherein all spirituall graces run, for the framing and working of spirituall life, conveying all to pitch upon those excellencies of the Sonne of God.

5. The object and root of this spiritual life, is, faith in the Son of God, loving him, and giving himselfe for him.

So there is a life beside the naturall life, and the root of it is Christ, who is our life. Life is the best thing in the world, most esteemed of us; as the devill said concerning *Job*, *Skinne for skin, and all that a man hath, will he give for his life*. Life is the foundation of all comforts, life is the vigour proceeding from soule and body; so the spirituall life is nothing else but the excellent vigour, and strong connected strength of the soul and body renewed, grounded on supernaturall reasons, which makes it follow the directions of the Word, over master the flesh, and so by degrees be transformed into the Image of Christ, consisting in holinesse and righteousness.

Desir.

The first point then is, That there is a better life than a natural life, because there is somewhat in a man which aspires and lookes to a better estate. A child in the mothers womb hath life and senses in that darke place, but it is not contented therewith, but is restless as in a prison, tumbles and turns up and down; for this life that it hath, is not to dwell there, but a beginning life to fit it to live in the more open and spacious world, whither it must shortly be sent forth. So in this dark life of ours, there is a divine instinct, power, and faculty in men, that nothing here can suffice: which shews that there is a place to satiate the will and the understanding, and fill the affections; that there is a condition which shall make a man fully happy; there must be a better life, which is, this spirituall

spiritual life; for this life which we live in the flesh, is a thing of nothing. Our little life we live here, wherefore is it? to live a while to eat and drinke and enjoy our pleasures, and then fall down and die like a beast? Oh no, but to make a beginning for a better life. If this life be such a blessing, what is then that most excellent spirituall life we speak of? it holds out beyond all. By this spirituall life when one is most sick, you shall see him most lively and spirituall, when sense, and spirit, and sight, and all faile; yet by reasons drawn from spirituall life, he comforts himselfe in Christ, the glory to come, and what he hath done for him. So the Apostle shews, the aime of a Christian is to be in sufferings of this life, for the increase of a better, 2 Cor. 4. 10. (saith he) *Alwayes bearing about in our body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.* When the body is weakest, the spirit is strongest; take a man who hath not this spirit and hope, he is almost at the apprehension of death, because he hath no faith, no knowledge, no quickning life, no sense or taste of more excellent things; he knowes not whether there be a holy Ghost or not: or if he be convinced in conscience, yet he is taken up with horrors, and fears condemnation at hand for ever more. Oh! what are we without this life? otherwise an heathen or an Infidell were as happy as we.

A Christian furnished with this spirituall life, can see Christ, and glory beyond all things of this life; he can look backwards, make use of all things past, see the vanity of things so admired of others, he can taste things nature doth not relish, he hath strength of reasons beyond all the apprehensions of reason: he is a man of a strong working. This should stir us up above all things to get this spirituall life in us, lest, like Saint Pauls living dead widow, we be dead whilest we be alive. Therefore unlesse we will be dead creatures, labour we must for a spirituall life, for there is another death which followes the first death. We not only lose God and Christ, life and glory, eternall life, communion with Saints and Angels, but also we come to eternall torments with the devil and his angels. Therefore above all things goe we to Christ, that we may live in his sight.

Whats the reason we seek not more for this spirituall life? because when the conscience is not awakened, we think there is no such thing: like Judas, walking on in the state of nature, in drunkenesse, voluptuousnesse, covetousnesse, and the like, untill we perish suddenly. If the conscience be awakened, oh then it is easie to work up such a one, who sees his misery, and desires the remedy. It was easie to perswade Jacob to send for corne into Ægypt when a famine was in the land of Canaan; it is easie to perswade men hungry and thirstie to eat and drink; easie to perswade a laden wearie man to lay down his burden and rest: so it is with us; if the conscience be awakened to have a sense of sin, and that intolerable wrath and eternal punishment due thereunto, we should and would long for this spirituall life.

I beseech you let us beieve there is such a life. Look 1 Pet. 1. 3. there he blesses God, *Who hath begotten us againe unto a lively hope by the resur-*

rection of Jesus Christ from the dead. None can goe to heaven, but they who are begotten againe here. The maine help is the use of the meanes; this is that poole of *Bethesda*, at which if we lie, the Angel of the Covenant will put us in to be healed: never rest then till this life be gotten in us. When we find such an antipathy betwixt our spirits, and sinne, as is betwixt poyson and them, then there is a beginning of the work. So we should hate sinful persons whose conversations hinder the progresse, and increase of our spirituall life. Those who venture upon all occasions, no wonder they doe fall in sinfull courses: what is all their care and endeavour but to draw one into sin? they care for their lusts and never think of any more. A Christian will care most for the nourishing of his best life, knowing that good and bad company doe, the one quicken, the other dead him.

Christ is called life, the bread of life, tree of life, and he gives us living water to refresh our soules, not that he is so essentially bread, or a tree, but by the efficacy of his working in us. For God is life in himself, therefore he sweares by it, *As I live* (saith the Lord) *I desire not the death of a sinner.* We consider not here of life so high, though this life must be derived from him principally. It is so naturally, the Sonne is the fountaine of life, because he is God, who is radically, fundamentally, and essentially life.

But before Christ be fitted to be life for us, he must be man first, as *Job. 6. 55.* *For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.* And the reason why he so quickens is, because he is also God, being that bread which came down from heaven, of which who so eateth shall live for ever. Now this great work of our salvation, being of necessity to be performed by an infinite person as God, (who could not die) he therefore took upon him a mortall nature, to open a current to mercie, and justice: therefore his flesh is meat indeed: but the flesh profiteth nothing without the spirit which quickens, for there must be a spirit to seal up all this unto us: as without shedding of blood no forgiveness of sins, so without the spirit sealing these things unto our soules, we can have no comfort of them. When we speak of spirituall life, he it is that we live for, by him, and in him, and through him we live. Therefore *1 Cor. 15. 45.* *The last Adam is called a quickning spirit,* because by that spirit he quickened himself, and quickens us now to live the life of grace, and shall hereafter quicken our dead bodies at the resurrection. So he is called, *The Sonne of righteousness*, for light and heat, because as the Sonne lightens and warms, so he is the light of the world (as *John* speaks) lightning every thing which cometh into the world: warming also and cherishing the masse of things, and therefore is called, *Light and Life*. Thus have we seen briefly there is another life than the life of nature; that this is a most excellent life, and that the root and spring of it is the Son of God. Now the way of conveyance of this life, is, *By faith*. A fountaine is not sufficient to send forth water abroad, there must be pipes to convey it for use: So from the heart and liver there must be arteries and veines for the maintenance of life, and conveyance of blood through all the

the body. Christ is the heart and liver of all spirituall life, but there must be a conveyance to bring it to us, and this is *Faith*.

But why is faith the grace to convey life to us?

1. Because we are saved now out of our selves by another: therefore that grace which brings us to this great Good, must leade us out of our selves. This faith doth, which is the hand of the soule, to lay hold of all the graces, excellencies, and high perfections of Christ.

2. Because Faith gives all the glory to the part yon whom it relies on and trusts, as *Rom. 3. 26.* Paul shews thy works were excluded, and such a righteousness was brought in (saith he) that he might be just, and the justifier of him which beleeveth: and then he adds, Where is boasting then? it is excluded; By what law of works? nay, but by the law of faith. If by love it had come, or humility, patience, or any thing in us, some boasting might have been, but this lookes another way, layes hold upon anothers riches. Faith acknowledgeth nothing to be at home, therefore it goes to another to fetch it, which else it would not doe.

3. Because we must be brought back again to God, by a contrary way than that we were lost by: for the same way we could never have recovered, The Serpent we know, shaked *Eves* faith, in believing the threatening: whilst they kept the word, and feared the commandment, they kept their life, but loosing this awefull respect, they lost communion with the fountain of love. So we fell by infidelity, and must return again by faith in the righteousness of another.

By this time we are come to the maine thing intended, *How we live by the faith of the Son of God.* We shall not haply reach the depth of so profound a myserie; onely I will indeavour to give you some few heads, wherein faith principally exerciseth her powers and functions.

1. The life of Faith is exercised in our effectuall calling.
2. In the state of justification, whence comes reconciliation.
3. In a vigorous life, arising on the comfort of our justification.
4. In our sanctification in those supplies, Faith finds out to make up the imperfection thereof.
5. The life of Faith in glorification.
6. We live by Faith in all the severall passages of this life, as we shall see when we come to them.

Thus we live continually by the faith of the Sonne of God, and so we must live till we come to heaven. 1. We live the life of Faith in our effectuall callings. The Spirit works it, the Spirit is Gods hand: this makes, that our eyes are bent upwards to see a better life, to see a calling, to live holily and righteously in all things to see what a rich meane is provided to reconcile God and man, to satisfie Justice, and so to draw us in a new way and course of life, to rely on God, and looke unto him in all

The life of
faith in our
effectuall call-
ings.

our

our actions. Then the grace of union is given. Gods Spirit works our hearts by this faith, to have first union, and then communion with God. Thus the soule being seasoned, and seeing the excellency and necessity of another new life, touches Christ, and begins to live the life of faith in effectually calling: for at first we are dead and unlovely creatures, estranged from grace and gracious actions, untill, in this estate, Christ is discovered by the Spirit, and faith to unite us to him.

Secondly, we live the life of Faith in Justification.

2.
The life of
faith in justifi-
cation.

This is a life of sentence that the soule lives by, peace being spoken unto it by the pardon of sin, for God by his Spirit doth report so much to the soule, giving us assurance that Christ our surety and peace-maker is raised againe. So *Ephes. 2. 5.* it is said, *Even when we were dead in sinnes, he hath quickned us together with Christ, and raised us together, and made us sit in heavenly places within him.* And why? Because our Surety hath paid our debt. We say of a man condemned, He is a dead man, till he have a pardon, which when he hath obtained, we turn our speech, and say, He lives. So in justification, being united unto Christ, and believing our pardon, we are said to live; our sinnes lie on him as our Surety: for then, as our husband in charge, he doth pay our debts. Thus by vertue of our marriage to Christ, he discharges all our debts, and goeth away with them; even as the *Scape-goat* in the wilderness went quite away with all the sins and iniquities of the people, never to return again. Look we therefore to our sinnes, the curse and wrath due unto them, and all as laid on him. Look at whatsoever is good in him, that is for us, whatsoever is evil in us, look in him for it, to have it taken away, pardoned, and not imputed.

1 John 2. 1.

As we sinne daily, so *Zach. 13. 1.* There is a fountaine daily running, to wash away sinne and uncleanness: therefore for our daily sinning, we must continually runne and bath our soules in this blood, apply the comforts of his sufferings, intercession, and obedience unto us. Saint John teaches us thus much; saith he, *If any man sinne, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sinnes: and not for ours onely, but also for the sinnes of the whole world.* If we sinne daily, he justifies the the sinner daily: he came to save sinners: therefore when sinne stirs us up to runne from God, we should runne to him Faith sayes, *There is no condemnation to those that are in Christ Jesus: Why? my sinne was condemned in Christ, and a condemned person hath no voice: Christ came to destroy sinne, and condemned sinne in the flesh; our sinnes were crucified with him, and are now all condemned sinnes if will goe unto Christ, who hath borne all our iniquities, as the Prophet Isaiah excellently shews. Therefore S. Paul triumphantly demands the question, Who shall lay any thing to the charge of Gods elect? It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? why? it is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall then separate us from the love of Christ?*

Rom. 8. 33, 34.

So

So in our daily finnes you see we have use of these things, to have (upon our confession) a daily pardon of course taken out every day. Thus God would not have us sinke; so long as there is matter of guilt in us, God will have a way to cleanse our souls, and renew our comforts; every day we runne into new debts, and every day in the Lords Prayer we are taught to ask pardon, and to runne unto God, to have the book crossed out with his blood; every day a Christian must eye the brazen Serpent, I mean the Lord Jesus, signified thereby; he must sprinkle his heart with the blood of Christ, that the destroying Angell may passe by him in the day of wrath, as the Israelites then did. This is it to live by faith, every day to sue out our pardon; to look unto our Advocate and Surety, who hath payed our debts, and cancelled that obligation against us, contrary to us, (as the Apostle speaks) daily to wash in that ever running fountaine; Christ is a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedeck: though the act be past, he remains the same still. What puts down our courage, striks us with terror and feare, but our finnes? Oh but why is this Brazen Serpent lifted up, but thus to wash away our daily frailties and failings, so as whosoever beleeveth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life?

Joh. 3. 14, 15.

So justification is not onely a sentence of pardon, but it is also (as Rom. 5.) *A title to life everlasting: For if by one mans offence death* Rom. 5.
raigned by one, much more they which receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness, shall raigne in life by Jesus Christ. Where God pardons, he advances: so if Satan shall come to shake my title, to shake this faith, assure him, that Christ came to save sinners. If he object, thy title is naught and stained, being thou hast so many sins and corruptions about the mortall body, answer him, What serves my faith for, but for my comfort, to shew me that my title is in Christ, my strength and ground of comfort is in him, not in my selfe: See one parallel example, how David lived this life of faith in justification: *If thou, O Lord,* Psal. 131. 4.
shouldest marke iniquities, who shall stand? There he pronounces death on himselfe ere he be acquitted, and so must we in the like case: But then comes the appeale, *But mercy is with thee that thou mayst be feared,* enlarge it your selfe: If a man be not found in this point, all he does is nothing, this is all in all, our sanctification without this is nothing, this is the ground of all: be carefull of this, to look to Christs obedience, life, death, and sufferings, and those comforts flowing from our interest therein.

But to direct you a little further ere we leave this sweet point.

First, look back every day unto the passages thereof, see how we have passed along, see what sinner have scaped thee: then come at night to God, confesse and be sorry for all, resolve against all, crave strength against all. O it is a fearefull state to sleep in sinne, better sleep in a house full of Adders and venomous beasts: see also and watch every morning, corruption doth cleave to all our best actions: we passe no day so, but we have cause to say, Lord forgive us our finnes. By this course we shall keepe our soules free, being ready for death: we shall by our particular

cular reckoning, every day clearing the score, be ready for our great general pardon, and when trouble comes, have only that to encounter with. I beseech you therefore put this in practice, be sure with the day to clear the sins of that day : so shall ye live a comfortable life, and be fit for all estates, for life, for death, for sicknesse, trouble, or whatsoever, all our businesse lying in heaven then.

Object. If it be thus, we need not care how we sinne, it is but every day to sue out a new pardon.

Answ. O beware, ere our pardon be sealed, there must be confession, sorrow for sinne, resolution with full purpose to doe so no more ; there must be arraignment, condemning, and judging of our selves for it, because whatsoever we would not have God to doe, we must do it our selves. Our time in getting this *Quictus est* sealed, is for the most part according to our sinne ; he that hath such a resolution to sinne every day, because sin is every day pardoned. he may goe long enough without pardon, at least comfort of his pardon. For though pardon of finnes be pronounced, yet God hath the keeping of joy in his own hand. As *David* had his sinne pardoned, by the judgement of faith he knew thus much, yet *Psal.* 51. how dorch he pray for joy, and that God would heale the bones which he had broken ? he roared all the day, and felt still a pain like the breaking of bones. The joy of the Spirit had left him, this he cryes to have restored. Thus though sinne may be pardoned, yet the more we sinne, the more hardly we shall repent, the longer we shall want joy, or (it may be) goe all our life time mourning without comfort in such a case. Now let us see

How it may be known that we live the life of faith in Justification.

1. Tryall.

Rom. 7. 4.

First, by trying how it comes in the soul ; as *Rom.* 7. 4. saith the Apostle, *Wherefore my brethren, we also are become dead to the Law by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.* After a man is dead by the Law, and apprehends himselfe slaine, then he comes to live this life of faith. Christ quickens none but the dead. Why do not the Papists attaine to this gracc of Justification ? They never see themselves wholly dead, but joyne some life to the naturall estate of man ; therefore Christ quickens them not ; such only are quickned by him, who find themselves dead in the Law : then they come to have a holy despaire, and to see that life and comfort is out of themselves in another. Justification springs from a holy despaire, and receiving life, after we have scene our selves dead.

2. Tryall.

Secondly, where this life of Faith is, there is a wonderfull high valuing

ing and prizing of Christ his righteoufnesse, merits, obedience, and wisdom of God in that way of forgivenesse of our finnes by this God-Man, the wonderfull Mediatour; as *Philp. 3.* *Paul* accounts all things but losse and dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord, being contented to suffer the losse of all things to win Christ. It is the precious pearle to sell all for. *Paul* accounts all our own righteoufnesse as nothing in regard of this. There must be a high estimation of the riches of Christs obedience and sufferings: for where there is not this high estimation of it, they are rotten in the point of Justification. But you see how *Paul* sets at naught and vilifies all things in regard thereof. So *Rom. 4. 16.* *Abraham* is brought in to be justified by grace, to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed. And *Psal. 32. 2.* he is pronounced to be the blessed man, unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and whose sin is covered.

Phil. 3. 8.

3. Tryall.

Thirdly, when we have a zeale against all contray doctrine, as *S. Paul* shewes to the *Galatians*, who would have joyned works to faith; *Christ* is become of none effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the Law, you are fallen from grace. And in the second Chapter he sayes, O foolish *Galatians*, who hath bewitched you, that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes *Jesus Christ* hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This onely would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by the hearing of faith? A man sound in the point of Justification, hath a hatred to Popery, and all such doctrine which impaires the riches of the grace of Christ. Death is in the Romish religion. Why are some of them then saved? Not because they dye in that Religion, but because they reverse their judgement in this point of Justification. So you see there is a hatred, a zeale in such, as *S. Paul* had against contrary doctrines.

Gal. 5. 4.

4. Tryall.

Fourthly, there is peace and joy settled in the heart: as *Rom. 5. 1.* Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord *Jesus Christ*: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoyce in the hope of the glory of God.

To ad one thing more ere I leave this point, In the case of relapse, what shall we doe then? are we not cut off? must we not have a new incision?

Case of relapse.

I answer, every man who falls, doe not fall on all foure, fall away quite; there be degrees of falling; as in a sick man, though ill, he is not by and by dead, some life and strength remains, which works out towards health againe; there is so much grace and life in Justification left, as to recover him againe. But as in other cases, so in relapses also, a man must live by faith. We see, *2 Cor. 5. 20.* even such as were in the state of grace,

Quest.
Answ.

grace, are intreated to be reconciled: though we fall, we must not therefore fall off, but stir up grace, and recover our selves againe. So *Esay 55. 7.* there it is said, *Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous his thoughts, and let him returne unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.* And then he addes the reason, *For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your wayes my wayes, saith the Lord: for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my wayes higher than your wayes, and my thoughts than your thoughts.* So *Ier. 3. 1.* *They say, If a man put away his wife, and she goe from him and become another mans, shall he returne unto her againe? shall not the land be greatly polluted? but thou hast played the harlot with many lovers, yet returne againe to me, saith the Lord.* Thus we must live by faith, for all our slips and falls, yet not to let go our hold, but still run to the hornes of this Altar; still fly to this City of refuge, and so we shall be safe.

Quest.

But what is the reason that many who are justified, yet find not daily comfort?

Ans.

Psal. 32. 3. Perhaps they dawb up themselves, and doe not search the bottom of their corruption: as *Psal. 32.* David when he kept close his sin, his bones waxed old through his roaring all the day long, and Gods hand was heavie upon him day and night. Then he shews how he found comfort: *I acknowledged my sinne unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid: I said I will confesse my transgressions unto thee, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sinne.* So it may be in this case, we come not off with God freely, we do not ransack our sins, we search not all the corners, sinne is a marvellous subtille thing: Againe, thereby many times God will humble us for a former sinne, and keep off comfort, untill we be more humbled, & stand in awe of sin.

Thirdly, hence springs a vigorous life.

A life of cheerefulnesse, when a man hath his pardon sued out, then comes life and joy, strength of holy actions well rooted and grounded. Who should joy, if a triumphant righteous person should not? Who have cause to rejoyce more than Kings? By Justification we are made Kings and Priests, are lifted above all signes and lusts, world and devil; have a right and title to heaven: shall a carnall man joy in his titles and priviledges, and shall not we much more, being sons of God by adoption, and heires of all things? So *Rom. 5.* *Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, and joy in tribulation.* Being once justified, the sting of all troubles is taken away; God is ours, we joy in God, this is all in all: The blood of *Abel* that cryes for vengeance; but the Spirit of God in this estate tells me, that the blood of Christ speaks better things, mercy, mercy: in his blood is alwayes comfort, though we be weak, and unskilfull to apply it. The washing in this blood should make a Christian walke on cheerfully in the comforts of the holy Ghost. But I hasten to the next, which is

Fourthly,

Fourthly, the life of Faith in Sanctification.

This Springs from these grounds : First, Faith layes hold on Christ, as God offers him : how is this ? see 1 Cor. 1. 30. *But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us Wisedome, and Righteousnesse, and Sanctification, and Redemption.* God gives Christ, not for Justification onely, but Sanctification also: and thus faith must apprehend him.

Faith receives him as whole Christ in all his offices ; not as a Priest to save onely, but as a King to rule ; as a wife receives her husband, to be governed and ruled by him.

Againe, Christ came not onely to take away the guilt of sinne, but the dominion of sinne ; he came (as *John* speaks) to destroy the whole work of the devill ; as it is said, *Ephes. 5. He gave himselfe for his Church, that he might sanctifie and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that he might present it to himselfe a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.* Christ doth purge his Church, not onely from the guilt of sinne, but also from the medling and polluting of it selfe in the world, with filthy things. So *Rom. 8. 3.* the Apostle shewes, that God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinfull flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who walke not after the flesh, but after the spirit. He came as well by water as by blood : Therefore faith puts him on, not only by Justification, but also in Sanctification.

To clear this ; upon Justification of necessity comes Sanctification ; For what is the stop of Gods mercy ? his anger for sin committed ; in which case he denyes his Spirit. But with reconciliation there comes also the Spirit : as *Ephes. 1. 13.* saith the Apostle, *In whom also after that ye beleaved, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.* Now the Spirit once given, is the seed of all graces ; whosoever is justified, hath the Spirit of Christ. *Rom. 8. And if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*

Againe, having the Spirit of Christ, Faith fetches all strength from Christ : *Sampsons* strength was in his lockes, a Christians strength is in CHRIST. This the Devill knows well, and therefore labours especially to weaken Faith, and draw us from our strength. Christ sayes, *Without me ye can do nothing* ; and Saint *Paul* affirms, *that he can do all things through Christ who strengthened him*. The Spirit gives strength.

Againe, as by Christ and his Spirit we have strength, so by his Spirit we have strong convincing reasons, to worke with strength from reason. Why doth a Christian carry himself in a holy just carriage answering his profession ? O (saith he) I have great reason, Christ hath loved me, and given himselfe for me, and should not I give my selfe to him, deny my lusts, and live to him ? For indeed, the foundation of all Christian obedience is laid by faith in Christ. So when a man looks

to Heaven, he hath a reason to abstain from all lets and hinderances of his safe and comfortable passage; to magnifie the riches of Christs love, which hath provided for him such an inheritance, and to live accordingly. So when he lookes to the pardon of sinnes past, he sees reason to hate them more & more, to strive against them in time to come, and to love Christ the more, who hath pardoned them. And when he looks to Gods free love in Christ, he sees reason to be inflamed with divine love, to admire the riches of that grace, and to be thankful.

Again, Christian affections are as the winde to carry us on in a holy life. Thus *strength*, and *reason*, and *affections*, these make a man work. First, *Love* sets us a work: we love him (saith the Apostle) because he loved us first. We have his love first shed abroad in our hearts, inflaming the affections, and kindling the heat of divine love; and then we send back a reflexe of love unto him. God cares for nothing but faith which workes by love. This love is a most operative affection stirred up by faith. Indeed all our Christian graces are set a work by faith in Christ.

Thus you see Faith apprehending Christ, as God offers him, and these things which I have mentioned, following, we come to live the life of Faith in Sanctification: an example whereof see in that woman, who because many sinnes were forgiven her, loved much. Love is bountifull; all obedience comes from love; love is the keeping of the Law. This affection is stirred up by faith, yea by Christ, for by him we have the promise of the Spirit, whence all graces come, and promises of the new Covenant, to have fleshly hearts given, and his Spirit put in us. All promises of Justification and Sanctification are derived from Christ; they are in him, made for him, and effected for his sake; For he is *Tea and Amen*, the center and ground of all the promises. Now being brought by faith to live in justification, we must of necessity also live by faith in sanctification. There be two parts of a holy life

1. In Mortification, dying to sin.

2. In Vivification, living to righteousness.

Two parts of
a holy life.

For the first, what does it to a man in this case? why, he looks what brought Christ to suffer so much, my sin; so this affection stirs up the same passion in him (in a sort) which was in Christ, and makes him hate sin with a perfect hatred, as in Zachary it is said, *They should look upon him whom they have pierced, and mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first born.* Secondly, it looks on the love of Christ, that made him give himself for us. This makes us to hate sin, and provokes us to live unto him who hath done so much for us. These two things in the death of Christ stir up hatred to sin.

2. Then again, in Vivification, the same Spirit which quickned him, doth

doth also quicken us : as *Coloss. 3. 1.* If ye then be risen with Christ, seeke those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God : set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. So that the same Spirit which is in Christ, being sent into us, quickens us also to have mounting and heavenly thoughts : as the foot and little finger (though distant) live and stir by the same life and spirits diffused through the whole body ; so the same Spirit quickens every Christian this way : as also by imparting strength, he imparts reasons from the Resurrection of Christ, to make us heavenly minded. So when the soule dyes one way, it lives another way. For Christ having by the Spirit discovered a better state, and life to come, of eternity, immortality, tranquillity, and glory ; then a Christian dyes to all worldly things and hath the affections taken up that way.

Thus we see every day so to leade our lives, as we not only live the life of Faith in Justification, but also of Sanctification ; how out of Christs fulnesse to fetch grace for grace. Therefore in all our wants go to him still ; he is not only a sacrifice satisfactory for our sins, but he is a storehouse also and treasure of all good things ; he is made unto us Sanctification, therefore beg we favour from him, and indowments of grace conformable to his grace. And again, when we lack fulnesse, let us not despaire, but fetch the large vessel of faith, and we shall have a share of the large graces which are in Christ, according to the largeness of our faith.

What is the reason that so few finde strength and comfort in Christianity?

Quest.

They set upon getting of grace, and killing corruptions by their own strength, and so are ever wanting ; but if a man depend upon God, he shall have fulnesse out of Christ. God hath sanctified his nature for this purpose, that out of his fulnesse we might have grace for grace. And so againe, every day goe to God, and plead for strength against sinne, power to leade a holy life, and imputation of Christs righteousness, to supply the defects of our sanctification. Saint Paul sayes, *I can doe all things through Christ that strengthens me.* It is a magnificent speech, & a great matter to have a man ready to suffer all things, & overcome all things ; this will make us work wonderfully, if we have this strength supplied. See an instance, *Luke 17.* Our Saviour tels his Disciples, that they must forgive their brother seven times, and seven times, as often as he confesses his fault ; they thought this a wonderfull hard duty, for nothing is so sweet to a man as a revenge, for he would willingly be his own carver in all things, and do things in his own strength. The Disciples upon this fall a praying, *Lord increase our faith* ; as though they had said, We had need of faith to beleieve the pardon of so many sinnes, and to enable us to forgive so often. And so I say of the subduing of sinne, we had need of faith to have so many sins subdued, yet faith will doe it.

Answ.

Now in this great worke, 1. Goe to God, and begge his Spirit, and repent of all manner of sin. 2. Then beg faith, this will set all other

graces awork ; It is like the bloud and spirits which run all the body over : so in our spirituall life, this faith must run along in all graces, and set them a working, yea, it sets God and all his Attributes awork ; it runs to Christ, and prays, Lord increase my faith, that can beare nothing as I should, resist nothing, beleeve nothing, and trust nothing. This indeed must be all our strength, to see nothing in our selves, but all in Christ.

Since *Adams* fall, it was appointed that Christ must keepe all our joy, our strength, and ability, yea, to be our life ; God will not since that time trust us with it, for we would quickly lose all again : It is Christs office, he hath these indowments, as man given him, to furnish us with all things fitting to a spirituall life. Faith will fetch all from God in Christ, who is made the Mediator of the New Testament, to convey all these things unto us. Yet further,

Let us see some Trials to discern whether we live this life of faith in SANCTIFICATION.

1. *Tryall.*

If it be thus with us, There will be a putting of our selves upon Christs government in all duties ; faith will doe all that Christ commands, depending upon him for strength ; and who so depends upon Christ for strength in one duty, will depend upon him for strength in another. There is a harmony betwixt the foule of a Christian and the command of obedience ; he hearkens to the *precepts* of duty, as well as to the *promises* of forgiveness of finnes. Where this universall obedience is not, here is not the life of faith in sanctification, for faith here takes not exception at one duty more than another, but looks for all the strength of performance from Christ, who for this cause is stored with all fulnesse, that it may drop down upon all his members.

2. *Tryall.*

Again, there will be a wonderfull care not to grieve the Spirit : (in such a one) As if he should say, I must depend upon the Spirit for helpe and assistance to doe all, to guide me in my whole course, and shall I grieve and leave off the Spirit ? shall I carry my self so, as to make him leave me ? he must leade, instruct, comfort me, and assure me of my happinesse ; shall I then quench the Spirit ? Therefore, I say, there will be a giving way to it, and a resolution setled, that this guiding in sanctification, is the best guidance of all. A beleeving heart does tremble at any thing which hinders the spirits working, it sets not a step forward in any thing without direction of the Word and Spirit.

3. *Tryall.*

3. Tryall.

There will be courage to set upon any duty, to incounter and resist any sinne. Upon this ground, as if he should say, Have not I a storehouse of strength to goe to? Is not he full of grace and goodnesse? Are not all his works wrought for us? Have not I exceeding many, great rich and precious promises of helpe? Is not he the truth it selfe? Is there not then supply enough in Christ to help me out in all things? It were *Pharaoh*-like to set us to work without strength and ability to goe through with our worke. There is light and heat in the Sunne to direct and cherish, much more in Christ their Maker. It is grace that leads us through all; we are justified freely through his grace, and by his grace we have continual strength supplied to inable us in all things. It is grace, grace; a sanctified liver by faith will therefore cheerfully set upon every duty.

4. Tryall.

Again, in this case all is lively in a man, as we see a lively fountain, the water thereof will sparkle and leape; so there will be living joyes, speeches, delights, exhortations, sensible of good and evill, he will trust God, relie on his word and promise, because Christ cannot touch the soul, but we must be lively, as the man who no sooner touched *Elisbaes* bones, but he stood up and revived; so a touch of Christ quickens and makes vigorous. As Christs promise is, *Joh. 4. 14. Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life.* Let

a Kings 13.
21.

The Use of all.

Be this; Upon this discovery remember to goe to Christ for succour, and labour to live plentifully and abundantly in him this life of faith.

But, may some say, how should I goe on to finish this great work of grace? it is a mighty thing to attain to, so many sins to overcome, so many tentations to buckle with, so many right hands and eyes to cut off and pull out.

Object: 1

I answer, Faith teaches us to fetch all from Christ, to beg his Spirit to helpe us in the course of Sanctification, that by his might we may prevaile; and so in all mastering sins beg strength of Christ, and then set upon the walls of *Jericho*, and they shall fall before you.

Ans.

How shall this be done?

As they did, they beleaved the promise, that compassing it seaven times,

times, it should fall to the ground: so we having such and so many promises for the subduing of sinne in us, let us set upon them, looke up unto Christ, beleve the promise, and our walls of sinne shall fall so farre before us, as they shall neither hinder our comfort, nor our salvation: Eclipse it they may for a little while, but the Sun will shine againe, break through and dispell all those clouds and mists.

Let us set upon all *Goliaths* therefore by the Word and Spirit, and withall set our will against them, that we heartily desire and indeavour to be rid of such lets and incumbrances, and we shall in the end finde a notable victory over them; and so in all troubles and vexations, as *Luke 17.* with the Disciples begge at God, the increase of faith, this will helpe us out in all stormes and tempests, helpe faith and helpe all; this will set heaven and earth a working for our good. Wee see *Hebr. 11.* that is all attributed to faith; Why? Many other things concurred in those excellent actions for doing of them; but all is attributed to faith, because faith is that great wheel which sets all the rest a working, and stirres up all, as *1 Cor. 13.* it is said of love, that it does all; for the same reason, because in those things there mentioned, it stirres up all the rest.

So in any grace which is wanting in us, goe to Christ, and say, Lord, I lack wisdom, counsell, strength, understanding, prudence in thy holy feare, the fulnesse of all these are in thee; Lord, it is for thy glory to helpe thy poore servant, and bestow some measure of these upon me to doe thy own work with; Lo, Lord, I lay my selfe down to thee to work by me. I have an angry spirit, full of tossings and tumblings, but thou art the Prince of peace, abounding in meeknesse. Oh bestow on me such a meek and peaceable spirit as learning of thee, I may be meek & lowly in heart. I instance but in a few things, enlarge them your selves: In all things let us, with confession of our wants, have an eye unto his fulnesse, and then we shall finde the more of his abundance, when we set not upon these duties in our own strength onely.

Two things are opposite to this life of Faith.

1. Despaire, this cuts the pillars of hope; against this divers (as *Luther* for one) have been tempted to despair, but yet letting on the worke have overcome; So the Israelites were afraid, upon the evill report of the Spies of *Canaan*, but when they went on, they overcame and beat down all their enemies. So we say, Oh, I shall never overcome such a sin, or such a corruption, or doe such a duty; this is not true goe on, looke to Christ, joine his strength with thy indeavour, be out of love with it, resolve throughly, set upon it strongly, and down it shall before thee.

2. The second is presumption, for this know, that in his owne strength shall no man be strong. It is Saint Pauls speech, *By grace I*

am that I am; so againe faith he, *In him* (to wit in Christ) *we live, and move, and have our being.* If we doe presume, it is just with Christ to forsake us, as he did *Peter*. Take heed also of spirituall selfe-sufficiency, lest we rest on our selves, and goe not to Christ; our moving to all good duty is by him; it is but a word for him to help us, either in things tending to a spiritual or a natural life: Therefore for conclusion of all, leave him not; in thy emptinesse goe to his fulnesse; if thy Cisterne be dry, turne the Cocke of thy faith, and his Fountaine will fill it againe; take him still along with thee, and thou canst not chuse but live this life of Faith in Sanctification.

THE

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THE

THE LIFE OF FAITH.

SERM. XVIII.

GALATH. 2. 20.

And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himselfe for me.



WE see here our blessed Apostle doth exemplifie himselfe a man, living another life than the life of nature, from higher reasons, grounds & Principles: *I live* (saith he) *by the faith of the Sonne of God.* First, he considers of another life than that which is rationall, correcting the errour of the same; for as reason corrects sense, so faith doth reason; this makes a man a new creature: the spring of this life is Christ: the meanes of conveyance is faith; It is meet now we should fetch all out of our selves; for since *Adam* lost what he had, it is dangerous to trust our selves with it any more; therefore Christ keeps it for us, & makes it ours by conveyance of his Spirit, making us all children of grace. Faith is wrought in us by the Spirit of God, & then it works, as *Augustine* sayes, *Adi agimus*; thus by effectually calling being once knit unto Christ, it is consecrated, as that by which we live. Christ is conceived in our soules by faith, as he was conceived in the Virgins womb

wombe by her yeelding to the promise; so we closing with the promise, faith is wrought, and then Christ comes to live in the heart, as (believing the promise) he came thereafter to live in her wombe. In the last Sermon we propounded many things touching the life of faith, how it lives in effectually calling, in justification, and sanctification, in glorification, and in the severall grand passages of this life, one of which remains yet to be unfolded, as,

The life of faith in glorification.

Quest. 1.
Answ.

But how? Vision is for glory, what hath faith to do with this, which is of things unseen?

I answer, we live by faith in glorification thus, because faith layes hold on the promise, and we have the promises of glory set down in the Word, and with the promise we have the first fruits of the Spirit, and having the earnest and first fruits, God will surely give the harvest. We have the Spirit, and thence faith reasons, God will make good his promise, he will not take back his earnest. Thus faith gathers great matters, beleeveth all, and so lives comfortably in expectation of fruition.

2

Againe, faith lives by the life of glorification in Christ the Head; there is but one life of Christ and his members, and one Spirit, one with him in union in the first degree of life; his glory is our glory. As in justification our debts are made his, so his glory is made ours, as it is *Job. 17.* and he is gone to prepare a place for us, to bring us where he is; *The glory which thou gavest me (saith Christ) I have given unto them; yea, and in him also we sit in heavenly places:* so in regard of Christ to whom we are knit, we live the life of glory.

John. 17.

Thirdly, by reason of the nature of faith, as *Heb. 11. 1.* which is to make things absent have a certain being. Now faith being wrought by an Almighty Power, raising us above our selves to fasten and lay hold on so many Mysteries, so it makes an Almighty working in the soul, makes things afar off to come evident: Thus it presents glory to us as though it were present, and we in some sort live by it.

How to know whether or not we live the life of faith in glorification.

1

This, where it is in faith, makes a Christian glorious, puts him in a spirit that is glorious in all estates, there is no grace in him, but it is set a fire by this faith of glory to come. When faith looks back on things, it hath strength, but when it looks on glory, all graces and vertues are set a work. 1. Hope is set on work by faith, and keeps the soul (as an Anchor) stedfast against all assaults. 2. Hope doth stir up patience, for (saith the Apostle) *what we hope for, we wait patiently for it.* Thus Patience is exercised two wayes, 1. In suffering of grievances. 2. In the expectation of time. So faith doth thus put life in patience, reasoning, Why? what, it will not be long, these afflictions will not indure ever, I
my

myselfe shall away ere long, glory, glory will come at last for ever and ever, therefore I will beare all patiently.

Againe, it sets courage and magnanimity aworke, as *Heb. 11.* what made all the Patriarks so stout to hold out and endure so many miseries, but that they had an eye to the glory to come? What made *Abraham* forget his fathers house, going he knew not whither, but that he looked for a City which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God, and therefore he was a stranger at home: The like we have of *Moses*, who forsook *Pharaohs* Court, because he saw him who is invisable. Yea, and of Christ himself it is said, that for the glory which was set before him, he despised the shame, indured the crosse, being now set at the right hand of the Father in glory and Majesty: So *2 Cor. 4.* (saith *Paul*) *For this cause we faint not, but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day;* (and the reason is) *For our light afflictions which are but for a moment, work for us a farre more exceeding and eternall weight of glory, while we look not at the things which are seene, but at the things which are not seen, &c.* He who thus hopes, does not want a comfortable life. And therefore upon this Ground it is the Apostles concluding exhortation, *1 Cor. 15. 58.* *Therefore my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, alwayes abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as you know that your labour is not in vaine in the Lord.* This makes a man zealous and fruitfull, so it makes a man sincere, as *2 Cor. 5. 9.* *Wherefore we labour (saith he) that whether absent or present we may be accepted of him:* The ground whereof is, *For we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ, that every man may receive the things done in his body.* In this case our comfort is in all things to be sincere in working.

Now there is an order of things; whosoever lives the life of faith in these grand passages, that soule lives the life of faith also in all other passages of our life; and these grand passages will runne in the lesser courses of our life. To touch one: When a man is in extremity of both outward and inward affliction, then faith layes hold on this generall, that God is wonderfull in working, and that his wayes and thoughts are not like our thoughts and wayes; in all severall cases faith makes use of all things God hath done or promised; as,

1. Of a man in the state of Grace, God in desertion appearing his enemy.

In this case faith at first conquered God, and obtained a blessing by wrastring as *Jacob* did: Faith therefore knows the same way again, to go to those precious promises God hath made, of returning again, not to forsake and be angry for ever, not to plow all the day to sow, (as *Isay* Isay 28.] speaks) faith knows that God works by contraries; It knows God takes away the sense of his love, not in anger, but to stir up the conscience and sense of sin, that we may lament and mourn for it the more, and so receive a surer report of the forgiveness of it. Faith does know that his Name is wonderfull: He raises things past hope; when a man

2 Cor. 1. 9.

is in despaire touching himselfe, and all things in himselfe, and of all comforts, then he is nearest home, as *Paul* said excellently, *But we had the sentence of death in our selves, that we should not trust in our selves, but in God which raiseth the dead*: So faith looks at God working with Christ the Sonne of his love, how roughly he dealt, yet lovingly with him; for Christ is a pattern as well as a cause of good unto us. Christ in the case of his forsaking went unto God, saying, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me*? Faith sets Gods promise against his present working; as though it should say, *Though thou killest me, yet will I trust in thee, for all this thy love is the same; thou art mercifull and gracious, and wilt not be angry for ever*. Faith (as I may say) pulls off Gods mask, sees through the dark Cloud that God appears an enemy for a time, that he may returne again with the more abundance of comfort afterwards. Faith knowes (as *Paul* speaks) that it is God that comforts the abject, raises the dead, will be seene in the Mount, making our extremity his opportunity.

So faith reasons, Is it so indeed, and is he wonderfull in working? doth he thus and thus work by contraries? then I will answer his working the same way, I will beleve on contrary in another, I will expect the Sun will shine againe, though now it be under a Cloud. The like I may say of any other extremity, as in the raising of our dead bodies. Faith (as it is in *Ezekiel*) sees a spirit quickning and putting life in dry bones, assuring us thereby, that he can as easily raise up the dead, as deliver us out of any extremity. Saint *Pauls* argument is, to trust in God, who raiseth the dead, can do all things, work wonderfull changes in our greatest miseries: As for the Church now in misery, there is a promise, That *Babylon* shal be cast into the Sea as a Millstone. Now faith believes the promises of glory, how that God will outwork all humane policie, and catch the crafty in their own nets; That as certainly as day comes after night, so assuredly all Gods promises shall be made good; as *David* resolves, *Psal. 130. 6. My soul waiteth for the Lord, more than they that watch for the morning, I say, more than they that watch for the morning; let Israel hope in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption.*

So in any Cloud get faith, and it will break through all impediments. Beleeve the former grand passages, of calling, justification, and sanctification, and then we will trust God for the rest. Then is faith most glorious when it works alone then it works most strongly; then also God delights to shew himselfe most effectually; for when all other means fail, and faith works it out alone in wrastling, then he hath all the glory, and then all is well; and therefore we must do in this case as the Prophet advises, *Let him who sits in darknesse and hath no light, trust in his Name.*

Faith does raise men up & set them upon a Rock, so sure, as nothing can take away their comfort and joy in God, because Christs name is wonderfull, who then works in desperate cases, when it is seasonable. A mighty God delights to work mightily, in mighty plunges; then faith plyes

plies the sute hard, Help Lord, or none can. Our Saviour, you see, slept in the ship untill a mighty tempest rose, and then he rebuked the winds and the seas : so he seemes to sleepe now in the Church ; why? that we may wake and stir him up by our prayers. When the Israelites tale of brick was doubled, and the people greatly perplexed, then *Moses* came fitly to promise deliverance ; so when the afflictions of Christians are doubled, then they are commonly most humbled ; they pray hard, search, beleve, and apply the promises, and then deliverance comes. Therefore in all exigents let we faith a work, for this stirs up prayer, and prayer stirs up God, and God stirs up all the creatures. Blame we not therefore any trouble so much, as to cry out, Oh I am undone, what shall become of me now ? no, find fault with an unbelieving heart ; It is not the trouble, but our weak faith which makes us so sink in these waves. Beg then of God in great trouble, great faith to goe through : cry, Lord increase my faith, for then the trouble is small, when the faith is great.

Secondly, in daily afflictions.

Whatsoever we suffer by them, labour to take away the sting of sin by living the life of faith in justification ; as *David* did, *Ps.* 32. confess we our sinnes to God, beg to have the sting of them taken away, and hereupon we shall find him to forgive our iniquity, as in *David*. So in all our weaknesse and imperfections of sanctification, goe to Christ for more grace, and say, Lord, though I be poor and empty of goodnesse, and of that which thy exact holinesse requires, yet Christ had abundance of fulnesse to supply my wants ; oh let me receive some grace for grace out of his fulnesse, and accept what he hath done for me in his pure and perfect obedience : good Lord, impute it to me ; for thou hast made him to be for us, wisdom, righteousnesse, sanctification and redemption. And so for glorification ; in all afflictions let we glory before our eyes, as *Paul* did ; remembring that our light and short afflictions, which are but for a moment, cause unto us a farre more excellent and eternall weight of glory, not being worthy of that glory which shall be revealed. So in any affliction, we have still use of the life of faith in glorification ; all these must be used in our afflictions ; living the life of faith in all.

Thirdly, in sicknesse of body.

Trust to Jesus, he is as powerfull and as willing to help us now, as he was to help others in the dayes of his flesh. All things are possible to us, if we beleve ; it is but a word for him to rebuke all storms and tempests whatsoever. Let us not doe like *Asa*, trust only in the Physician, or in subordinate means, but know, that all Physick, is but dead means without him. Therefore, with the means run to Christ, that he may work with them, and know, that vertue and strength comes from him, to blesse or curse all sort of meanes.

4

Fourthly, so for disgraces.

1 Pet. 4. 14.

Commit we our credits to him as our lives, he cares for both, remembering what Peter speaks, *If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.* He means such a Spirit shall rest on us, which shall make us glorious. So Heb. 12. 2. *We are therefore in sufferings pointed unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith, who for the Glory which was set before him, endured the Crosse, despising the shame, and is set downe at the right hand of the Throne of God.* This suffering hinders our happinesse; look to him, he is now set in glory, so shall we be. It is not in mans power to alter mens conceits, God hath this in his power, when he will heap honour, or power disgrace upon any man: Therefore let us look up and desire no more good name than God will afford us. If dogs bark, no matter, at length God will clear our name, and our righteousnesse shall break forth as the noone day. Thus much the Church assures her selfe of, Micah 7. *Rejoyce not against me, oh mine enemy, though I fall, I shall rise againe.* As though she should say, Gods servants are never finally forsaken; a time will come when God will do me good for all this; when I am humbled and have made a right use of it. That we may do this, think, God in Christ hath given me the pardon of sinne, what matter then of all other things which cannot hurt me, and shall all work together for my good? David (we know) Psal 6. began to complain grievously in this kinde; but afterwards, Verse 8. when the Lord had spoken peace unto his soul in the life of faith in justification and sanctification, then he sayes, *Depart from me all ye workers of iniquity, for the Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping: then he despises the shame.*

Psal. 6. 8.

5

5. In our particular places and graces.

Luke 5. 5.

Thus must we here live by faith also: for a Christian knows, that he stands as in a Circle set there by Christ to work: therefore faith concludes, Here I look for understanding, wisdom, success, blessing and ability to go through stich with the businesse I am set about; he that set me here, will enable me, & if I have ill successe then I will go to Christ, and I shall speed well, (with his assistance) as Peter did, who though he had toiled all night and catcht nothing, yet at length, at Christs command casting forth his Net, catcht abundantly. So there be many, who take much care and toyl for heaven, to subdue & overcome corruptions, and yet catch nothing, find no answerable success; oh let them go to Christ, and trust him, (as Peter did) & they shall overcome so at length, as all shall be well: So if Magistrates, Ministers and people would trust God for strength more than they do, things would be better than they are with them; as we see the instance in Moses, who being commanded to go to Pharaoh, complained for want of utterance: but what saith God to

to him, *Who hath made mans mouth & or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind & have not I the Lord &* Therefore in all such wants, faith goes unto him for it. The like we read was Christs encouragement to his Disciples, *Luke 21. 15. Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what we shall answer, for I will give thee a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist.* This was made good also in the by-past troubles of the Church, when poor silly women put to silence, with their answers, great learned men.

Now faith sees what *Moses* did, *Hebr. 11.* It looks up to Christ, to him who is invincible. It is with faith in this case, as it was with *Micaiah*, *1 Kings 22. 19.* when he had scene the Lord sitting on his Throne, and all the Host of heaven standing by him on his right hands; then *Ahab*, a King on earth, was nothing unto him, when he had seen the King of heaven in his glory: So we by faith seeing Christ, heaven and glory over our head, caring for his Church, standing at the right hand of God, by assistance of his Spirit, this will put invincible courage in us.

6. For provision and protection.

Faith goes to Christ, hangs & depends upon him for all these things; faith knowes that it hath encouragements, promises, and examples enough to strengthen our dependance on him, as to name one: *Luke 12. 32. Fear not little flock, for it is your Fathers wil to give you a Kingdom.* Hence the beleiving soul argues, from the lesser to the greater, What, will God deny me daily bread, that will give me heaven, and raise me up to life everlasting? and so it cites and revolves the promises often, that a little which the righteous hath, is better than the abundance of the wicked; for he adds no sorrow with it; that a little with love is better than a stalled Oxe with contention. Yea, and in this case, by faith we know that the Saints (in extremity) shall be extraordinarily provided for; sometimes he will blesse a little, as the seven loaves, and five fishes multiplyed suddenly to feed five thousand people; they were in great want before, and were suddenly supplied, so it shall be with us; sometimes we know the womans Oyle increased; the Ravens also in distresse shall feed *Elias*; *Lazarus* shall have the dogs to lick his soars. In the use of the means we need not fear; and wanting means, God will create means when all doth faile; for then faith lives best, knowing that God commands all means, and can suddenly do what he will.

And so for protection and preservation, faith knows, that Christ will be our shield and protector, therefore it relies upon him. *Fear not,* (saith God to *Abraham*) *for I am God All-sufficient, thy Buckler, and thy exceeding rich reward.* Hence the Saints have so esteemed him in all ages; their Rock, Fortresse, strong Tower, Salvation, Helper, Deliverer, Refuge, and the like; and Christ tels his Disciples, that he is with them

even unto the end of the world. He rules his by his Kingly office for the good of his Church thus much we know he made good, both in *Egypt* and in the wilderness, bringing his people safely into *Canaan*, through all those dangers they were in; providing also for the woman, persecuted by the *Dragon*, a place of refuge in the wilderness, where she was safely kept.

7

7. And for our Children.

Objct. Oh yes some, I could be content with a little, but I have many Children.

Sol.

Here faith sets in, and answers, But are they not also Christs Children, and must not he provide for his owne? doe therefore what thou canst, and for the rest despair not, but cast this burthen upon him, who hath commanded thee in nothing to be carefull, but in all things to make thy suits and supplications known with prayer and thanksgiving. In this case faith in a dying Parent follows Christs example, John 17. *Thine they were, and thou gavest them me, and they have kept thy Word. Holy Father, keep through thine own Name, those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.* So a dying Father may say, Lord, thine they were, thou gavest them me, I have done what I can for them, thou Lord art the first, best, and last Father, the world and the fulnesse thereof; now therefore, holy Father, keepe them in thy Name, for thou art the refuge of the poor and needy, and thy time is to help when all other helpe is at a stand. Why, consider, is not he the Father of the fatherlesse? then let us leave them to him with that resolution and confidence of the Prophet *David*, *When my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will take me up.* Not that he means, fathers and mothers use to doe so, but though they should, or even when they forsake us by death, yet God doth wonderfully save and protect their posterity. Then learne to exercise thy faith, though thou leave them little, yet trust in God, and know, that he who rests under the shadow of the Almighty (as the Psalmist speaks) shall be safe. He who provided for them in the womb, and prepared breasts for them ere they came into the world: he who put so tender affection in women, know that he will also have care, and be more compassionate over thy children after thee. Let faith then settle thy heart on these grounds; in the womb they were nourished and bred thou knowest not how; (*Oh saith David, I am fearfully and wonderfully made*) and after thy death they shall be nourished thou knowest not how. For this cause many are punished in their generations, because they would not trust to God, but did use ill means to perpetuate their houses, as covetousnesse, worldly policy, and the like.

Psal. 27.

8

8. In prosperity.

Is sweetens it.

What use is there in this, of the life of faith? O yes, very much; for, First, what makes prosperity sweet, but because by faith one knowes that

that his sins are pardoned? What comfort, I pray you, hath a prisoner in the Tower of his life, though he abound in all outward plenty of gold and silver, so long as his pardon is not sealed? This sweetens prosperity, the life of faith in justification, that all my sins are nayed with Christ upon the Crosse, that the hand-writing against me is cancelled and done away. Thus one comes to be of the first borne, whose names are written in heaven, and to joy that he hath a double portion, being exempt from many fears, crosses, and miseries others are vexed with. Who are better Christians than they that know they enjoy all good things with Gods favour and blessing? here faith hath a continuall work, to see Gods love in all, and so to be abundantly thankfull, according unto that we have received.

Secondly, the life of faith orders our prosperity: How? Not to abuse those good blessings bestowed on us, not to be puffed up by them, not to disdaine, but to relieve others by them: Faith causes us to think of them as they are set forth in the Word, it causes that we delight not too much in them, shewes us better and more lasting riches, friends, & the like; It makes us take Saint Pauls counsell, 1 Cor. 7. to rejoyce and doe all things as though we did them not, and to use the world as though we used it not, because the fashion of this world passeth away: and therefore it makes men (as Paul speakes in another place) not trust in uncertaine riches, but in the living God, who can do all things: In summe, it causeth us to manage all the things of this world so, as thereby not to have our hearts drawn away from the chiefe good.

So againe, in all the comforts of this life, it makes a man eate, and drink and sleep, and do all in Christ, looking up unto him in all his actions; living by faith, and joying that now he hath a title and a right to all the creatures; he being cleane, now to him all things are cleane, because he is now in Christ, who is pure without spot, and Lord of all; for to the unclean all things are unclean. It cost Christ deare to purchase our liberty to the creatures. Therefore finding and joying in this freedome, we live the life of faith in prosperity; whilst it eyes God in all the passages of this estate; sets him in the first place; receives all, and joyes in all, as coming from the love and graciousnesse of so good a God; returning in humility the strength and glory of all unto him; supplying also the necessities of his members.

9. In Gods Ordinances.

In the preaching of the Word, and in the Sacraments, Faith makes us live this life of faith, not to be captious how this comes, that God hath appointed this meanes (especially) unto the end of the world, to teach man by: It makes us lay aside by-conceits, to think, Why, it is enough for me, his will shall be the rule and square of all my thoughts and actions; he hath sanctified and made effectuell this Ordinance to this purpose, therefore I beleeve he will blesse his own means; which,

though (to the world) it seem to be the foolishnesse of preaching, yet it shall be effectually to my salvation, and the rest of his Church; he made the world by his mighty Word, he repaired the decayed world thereby, and by it he will also call for and raise up all the dead at the last day. Therefore I will rest upon his Ordinance, without further dispute.

And so for the Sacraments. What is a little water to the washing away of sin? Oh, but the blood of Christ, this is the cleanser, this washes away our sinnes; his Ordinances make it powerful and effectually to that end he hath appointed it, for the beleiving soule: So the Bread and Wine in the Lords Supper seeme weak and feeble things; I, but they are ordained to strengthen and increase faith. Here the Christian soul believes, God can so strengthen faith by his Spirit, working in us a nearer communion with Christ, and hatred of sin thereby; blessing his own Ordinance so, that as meat and drink refreshes, sustaines and feeds this mortall body, so shall his Ordinances by his blessing be effectually, for the refreshing, fortifying, and nourishing of our souls to life and endlesse immortality, Againe,

10. So in our combates.

Of necessity we must fight the good fight of faith many wayes. First, if any trouble assault a beleever, he hath recourse to the life of faith in justification and sanctification, as he conquered God at first, in repenting, praying, and wrastring for forgiveness of sins, and applying the promises; so now he knowes how to conquer any evill that befalls him; as it was said to Jacob, *Thou hast, as a Prince, had power with God, and with men, and hast prevailed*: So a Christian having in his first new-birth pangs conquered God, and prevailed, now by the same assistance and skill, he can conquer all things also.

Secondly, a Christian fights this good fight by living the life of faith in glorification. Saint Paul sayes, *Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold of eternal life*: insinuating, that the way to live this life of faith, is, to lay hold of eternall life, having serious & constant meditations of the glory to come, *Canaan* (we know) was given to the Israelites, divided and given by Jacob, ere his death, long before they came there; who would not fight then for such an inheritance? Now there were Serpents, Giants, strong and many enemies by the way; so they fought against all, and overcame all: euen so betwixt us & heaven there be many enemies to overcome: the flesh, the world, the Devill, and all those numberlesse number of events, which by their malice & our frailty we are tempted unto. But here faith must lay hold of eternall life, answer all objections with this, all these shall not make me lose eternity, there is no comparison betwixt heaven and earth; false pleasures here, and true substantial joyes to come. This (saith the Scripture) is our victory which overcometh the world, even our faith: Why? Because faith makes Christs victory ours. Christ overcame sinne, Hell, death, the world, and all; and

and Christ himself being ours, we have all made effectual for us, which we have done and suffered : so Christ overcomes in us by his Spirit, as the Apostle hath it, *1 John, Stronger is he that is in you, than he that is in the world*: so that a weak Christian hath a strong Spirit in him, which no power can prevaile against, though he hath some foyles.

But how doth faith fight against the world by the life of glory?

Quest.
Sol.

The world offers and presents petty base things before us; faith keeps off, and opposes the glory to come, preferring that before all; as *Moses* did, who because he saw him who is invisible, refused to be called the son of *Pharaohs* daughter, esteeming the rebukes of Christ before all the treasures of *Egypt*; because this glory presented better things unto him than this world hath. And if (on the left hand) the world threaten troubles, afflictions, persecutions and the like, for well doing, and not running into sinfull courses with others; then faith remembers, as it is *Rom. 8.* that *all the sufferings of this present world are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.* We see then that the life of faith that glory to come, helps us in all tentations to fight the good fight against all enemies whatsoever. He who hath a Crown before him, it will make him run through the Pikes or any thing to attain it : so faith having glory, immortality, and the joyes of heaven before it, overlooks and despises all oppositions, and sees all things subdued to Christ, as though all were past; whereupon it gathers assurance, that it shall triumph over all in him,

II. So we persevere unto the end.

11

Fighting and living this life of faith; that is, a Christian makes it his daily and continuall life: This is a ground of perseverance; a Christian then lives in a sort the life of Christ, as it is said, *Rom. 6. 9. Christ being raised from the dead dyeth no more, death hath no more dominion over him* : So such a one once living by faith, dies no more, there is a perpetuall supply of spiritual strength imparted unto him from Christ the Head, whereby he lives by faith in all the passages of this life. *Rom. 8. What shall separate us from the love of God in Christ? nothing can* : It is a never-failing river, entertained unto death, that whosoever drinks thereof shall never thirst again; for Christs promise is, *Whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die*, for after faith ends, then comes the life of vision : So that all our life the life is the same, we continue so living even untill death, and then faith leaves us to the fruition of the thing beleeyed. But doth faith leave us when we come to die? Oh no,

12. We die by faith also.

12

For a Christian knows that he is in heaven already; As he lives by faith, so he dyes in faith also; faith makes him, like *Stephen*, resigne his soule to God with comfort; he knowes that Christ will receive that soule, which he hath purchased by his blood. 2. He dyes by faith, because

cause he sees death conquered in Christ before him, and because he lookes beyond death, and over-eyes all things that are betwixt him and glory, having the Spirit of Christ in him, which makes him bold and fearlesse, as *David* sayes, *I will not feare though I walk in the valley of the shadow of death, because thou art with me.* This blessed faith in the Son of God makes us doe all things, suffer all things cheerfully and comfortably. Faith makes absent comforts present to us; it eyes such sweet contentment in Gods presence, that all difficulties below seem as nothing: it knowes whom it hath trusted, and what is laid up for it. A believer sees invisible things. Oh the glorious things that the faithfull soul beholds! he sees the *Angels* ready to carry him from a house of clay to a heavenly Paradise; from the company of sinfull men here in misery, to the sweet society of Saints in perfect blisse, which he himselfe now enjoyes the first fruits and earnest of, and longes to be fully possessed with.

Object. But how can this be, when neither eye hath seen, nor ear heard what God hath prepared for his?

Answ. Indeed to carnall sense these things are undiscernable; but to a renewed soule, the Spirit that God hath given them, discovers the eminency thereof above all earthly contentments whatsoever. We see they are compared to a *Kingdome*, to a *Feast*, to a *Crown*, familiar resemblances, that so the meanest capacity might conceive, and be taken with them. What more desirous than a Kingdom for honour? what glory is there in a rich diadem? and what sweet refreshings are there in a feast? Yet alas, these are all but shadowes, the reallity is heaven it self. Talk not then of riches, but of thriving in grace, which will make you rich indeed. What good will the riches of the world do us at the last day? they take them wings and fly away: if we have not the true riches, we may die in want for all these, as *Dives* did. Know this, that if there be any thing good in earthly kingdomes, there is much more in this spirituall Kingdome.

Again, the Children of God know these heavenly things by their *taste*; they have the first fruits of them even in this life; and if the communion of Saints here be so delectable, how much more will it be in Heaven? Gods children have a taste of that eternal Sabbath in heaven, by keeping a holy Sabbath to God here on earth; they have a taste of that eternall rest and peace which they shall enjoy hereafter, by the peace of conscience which they have here; and that heavenly joy which doth flow into the soule now, is but a taste of that eternall joy which we shall have our fill of one day.

God is so farre in love with his Children, that he keeps not all their comforts for another world, but gives them a taste of the sweetnesse here; but what are all refreshments below to that which we shall have above in Gods presence? As *John* saith, *We are the sons of God, but we know not what we shall be.* Only this we know, that when Christ our Head appears, all his members shall be like to him. Our life may well be said to be hid with Christ in God, because flesh and blood discerns not the things

things prepared for those that love him; we lead a hidden life, we cannot see God face to face, or know him so perfectly here as one day we shall doe, all that we have now is a taste of the good things to come, and but a taste.

The life which we now live is a life of *faith*, and we are to walk by faith, not by sight; therefore if God did give us all here; what need have we of faith? it were no commendation for a Christian to abstain from the sinfull courses of the world, if he did see the glory that he shall have, present before him; but God will manifest to the world that he hath a people whose comforts are higher and greater than the world affords, who live by faith and not by sight.

God doth not reveal to us now all that we shall have hereafter, because we are not capable of such delicacies, we cannot digest them; as *Peter* and *John*, they could not see Christs glory in his transfiguration, but they must be spirituallly drunke with it; *Master, it is good being here, let us build Tabernacles.* Oh but faith the holy Ghost, *They knew not what they said.* So likewise *Saint Paul* when he was caught up into the *third heaven*, and heard unspeakable words, he could not digest them, they did so *ravish him*; therefore God gave him a *prick in the flesh*, that he might not be exalted above measure. Are we stronger than *Peter* & *Paul* to bear these revelations from above? Is it not goodnesse in God to reserve them, till such time as we are able better to relish them? *Moses* desiring to see the face of God, had this answer, *No man can see my face and live.* So he that would conceive aright of the joyes of heaven, must die first.

Though we cannot see or understand these spirituall excellencies, yet let us often thinke of them. The life of a true Christian is taken up with the consideration of those things which he shall hereafter have in heaven; there is no grace in a Christian, but it is set aworke this way; what is *faith* without this? the chief work of faith is about *things not seene*; it makes absent comforts to be in a manner present; and so overcomes the world, by seeing things above the world. How is *patience* strengthned, but by the consideration of future relief? If there were not better times hereafter for the godly, they were of all creatures most miserable; but the thought of that makes them wait with patience. What makes men so tender in conscience, and so fearful to sin, but the eying of him who is *invisible*?

And have we such glorious comforts in another world? Let this cheare up our hearts with joy against all contempts and slighting here below. The world knowes not God, nor us, neither doth it know what things are prepared for us; and shall we care for their abuse and scorn? what though we walk up and down here unknown, our condition shall one day be manifested with glory in the sight of all, and then we shall esteem of things below as they are. The consideration of this should raise up the spirit of every Christian. What makes us do things that are excellent, but our beleeving an excellency in such wayes and courses? He that sees an excellency in God, you may turne that man loose to any

any temptation; for if Sathan tempts him to any sin, he thus considers with himself, Shall I lose the sweet contentments of heaven for a base lust? Shall I lose my peace of conscience, and joy in the holy Ghost, for the satisfying of my unruly corruptions? Consider what we lose in the committing of any sinne; the profit and pleasure that a man gets in following the world, alas, what is it to the precious comforts which we lose? who would be beholding to Sathan for any thing? Is it not a disparagement to go from God, as if there were not sufficient in him to quiet the soul? Hath not God enough, but we must be beholding to the Devill our enemy?

Oh then let us admire the love of God to his poor creature, in preparing such great things for him. Let us say with David, *Lord what is man that thou art so mindfull of him, or the son of man that thou so regardest him?* How wonderfull is thy mercy in having such high thoughts towards lost sinners? Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that hath thought us meet to be partakers of an inheritance, immortall and invisable, reserved in the heavens for us. A sound Christian begins his life in heaven here upon earth: he praises and glorifies God by a holy and fruitfull conversation. This is our best way of blessing God. Praise in the heart will soon break forth in the tongue.

The Apostle when he speaks of the state of Gods Children, calls it a *heavenly Kingdom, a glorious inheritance, a wonderfull light, a never fading condition*; he is not able to expresse their happinesse, it is every way so full; *So God loved the world*; So, as I cannot utter it. Behold what manner of love the Father hath shewed, that we should be called the sons of God: It is so free and so rich love, that I am not able to declare it. Envy not then the wicked in their pleasure and bravery, alas, they are but for a tearme of life; pitty thou rather to see them delight in such sinfull vanities. Shall a Christian envy any in their pleasures here, when he himself is in such a state of admiration? he should be so far from grudging and repining at the prosperity of others, that he should solace himselfe cheerfully with his future hopes. The thoughts of his good to come, should revive him more than any want or discouragement should deject him. What though we have not our comforts in possession? we are sure of them, God reserves us for them, and them for us. We are like little children, that think not of the portions that their parents have left them, till they come to age. Many weak Christians thiuk not of their Fathers portion, they mind not those unspeakable joyes laid up for them in their minority; but as they grow in grace, so they will have more knowledge of it, and longings after it. If it be a great matter to come out of a dark prison, to see the light of the Sun, what will it be to come out of this dark world, into the glorious light of heaven? A naturall man knowes not this, but when once we come to see that light that we shall have in glory, then we will admire it, and cry out with the Apostle, *Oh the exceeding love of God in Jesus Christ!* Indeed those things that came by the Gospel, cause wonderment, that God should love flesh and bloud so, as to prepare such excellent things for them.

But

But we must know, God doth qualifie all those here, that he prepares happinesse for hereafter: The reason is, because no unclean thing shall enter into heaven; we must not think to come out of the mire & dirt, and enter into heaven presently; no, there must be a suitableness wrought in us for such a condition. Those that wil not live holily here, have no dwelling in that holy place. If thy heart can tell thee that thou hadst rather have this honour, and that pleasure, than grace in thy soul, the word of God doth as plainly tell thee, that the excellencies of heaven are none of thy portion. A swine loves the puddles, rather than the sweet fountain; so wicked men delight in the world, more than in heaven, which plainly shews they shall never come thither. Nothing will comfort us at last, but a true change of heart: If thou beest not a new creature, thou shalt have no part in the new Jerusalem: therefore let us not feed our selves with vaine hopes. There is none of us but desires heaven, but why dost thou desire it? is it because it is set forth to be a *Kingdome*, an excellent place of joy and rest? is it for this onely? Assure thy self then thou wilt never come there. Thou must desire to have heaven, because of the Divine nature, because it is a holy place, and neer to God, if thou wouldst possesse it indeed; and *if thou hast this hope in thee, thou wilt purge thy selfe as he is pure.*

If we would have *faith* ready to die by, we must exercise it well in living by it, and then it will no more faile us, than the good things we lay hold on by it, untill it hath brought us into heaven, where that office of it is laid aside. Here is the prerogative of a true Christian above an hypocrite, and a worldling, when as they trust, and things they trust in fayles them, then a true beleevers trust stands him in greatest stead.

For vse of all.

Seethen how *faith* is the life of our life, and the soul of our lives, because by this we are knit to Christ Jesus, the life and food of our souls. Let us then make use of it, house and intrench our selves in him, as it is *Psal. 90. 1.* make him our dwelling place in all generations: he is our buckler, our enemies must break through Christ ere they can come at us; all is ours in him, & in his strength & might we shal overcome all adverse powers whatsoever. You see then that this is no idle, but a mighty working grace. It works in heaven, and earth, and hel; it works against Satan, it works by love to God; makes us love him and work to him; & makes us industrious to work for others. Faith is the root of the tree; love the branches. Thus faith works mightily and strongly; it is a quickning & an active grace: Those therefore who find it not active, no marvel they want the comfort of it; they must strive to stir it up, & set it a work to live by it: Those who find they have it, let them improve it to a better use than many do, to swear by it. This shames us in troubles to be unarmed; where is our shield of faith, when every little poor dart strikes our armour through? this shews we have but a paper shield. We ought therefore to bewail our unbelief, and labour for this grace, which

which is so active and usefull, so much the rather, because it is most miserable to be in a storme without a shelter ; this will help us in all miseries whatsoever, and make us conquerors over all in him who hath loved us. Oh the excellent use of the life of faith ! It looks back, and makes use of all Gods works, promises, wonders, threatnings, and judgments ; and gathers strength, wisdom, courage, instruction from all ; It looks and sees all things past, as it were a working, doing, promising, threatening, in present, and is answerably affected ; when by strength of fancy it presents the Ideas of things past, (to work upon us the more) as present, and so is over-awed from sinning against God. Sometimes it sees all this world a fire, and therefore for worldly things and inticements it puts them over so much the more lightly, as perishing things, condemned to be burnt : So it is the best prospective in the world, it presents to it self things afar off, as present and at hand, and makes them excellent, great and glorious to the sight a far off. Therefore above all things study we to live this life of faith, (oh it is worth all our pains) and shun infidelity, as that which only makes us miserable, causing the guilt of sin to lie on us, and shutting us up under the wrath of God ; yea it seals us up to the day of wrath, turns all our actions to be sinfull in Gods sight, and is cause of that great condemnation *John* speaks of. Whereas by the contrary, the believing soule lives a comfortable life, is admitted into the glorious liberty of the Sons of God, hath a shelter to keep off all storms, and tempests whatsoever, and comes by this life of faith to be assured of his part and portion in the love, merits, obedience, sufferings, death, resurrection, ascension and intercession of the Son of God, In summe to be assured of its salvation in particular, as *Saint Paul* was ; (*Who loved me, and gave himselfe for me.*) But thus much shall suffice for this time, I shall prosecute things more fully in the next.

SALVA-

SALVATION APPLYED.

In one *SERMON*.

WHEREIN IS SHEWED,

The more speciall and peculiar work of Faith,
in apprehending Christ as our *own*; the grounds thereof
are shew'd, with meanes to attaine it, and most of
all the knotty objections against particular assu-
rance of Gods love answered.



*HEB. 10. 22. Let us draw neare with a true heart, in full
assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil con-
science, and our bodies washed with pure water.*

L O N D O N,

Printed for HENRY CRIPPS, at his Shop
in Popes-head Alley.

1 6 5 8.

APPROVED

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3. HEARCEY, J. L. 1974. *Unpubl. M.S. Thesis*, University of Wisconsin, Madison.

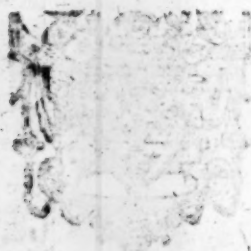
1870-1871

in the morning, the ground is still very wet.

to find her, and to get her out of the house.

all the known objections have been met.

Images of Gods love and mercy.



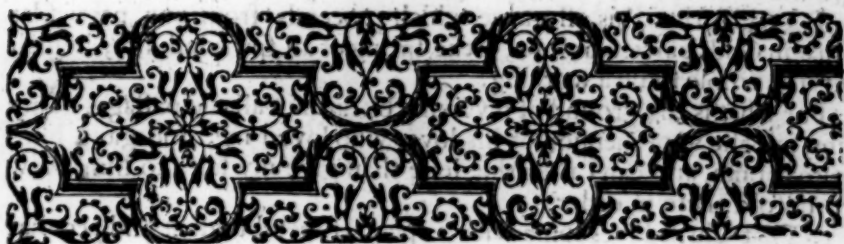
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SALVATION APPLIED.

SERM. XIX.

GALATH. 2. 20.

And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who hath loved me, and gave himselfe for me.



WE have already, out of the words immediately going before, spoken of spirituall life, and of the excellency of it; and, in the third place, of the manner of conveyance, which is by faith; and fourthly, the spring and fountaine of this spirituall life, which is the Son of God, described here by his love, and the fruit of it, [*He loved me*] And, as a fruit of that love, *He gave himself for me.* Now to come in the last place to the Apostles particular application, which he expresseth in this word [*me,*] *Who loved me, and gave himself for me.* Wherein these points offer themselves to our consideration.

First, that God loves some with a peculiar, and with a speciall love, *Who loved me, and gave himself for me.*

Secondly, that faith answers God and Christs particular love, by a particular application, [*Who loved me.*]

Ee 2

Thirdly,

Thirdly, that this particular faith in Gods particular love, is the ground of assurance, which springs from this particular faith.

Fourthly, that this assurance which proceeds from our particular faith in Gods particular love, is the spring of all spirituall life, which sets the whole soule a working.

For what is the ground of my living by faith in all the passages of my life, but the apprehension of his love, who loved me, and gave himselfe for me, and can I then doe lesse than give my selfe to him? Now to unfold these in order.

1. *Point.*

Ex 28. 21. 30.

John 17. 9.

1. That Christ loves some with a speciall superabundant and peculiar love; for Christ when he suffered upon the Crosse looked with a particular eye of his love upon all that should beleieve in him: as now in heaven he hath carried our names upon his breast; as the *High Priest* had on his Brestplate written the names of the twelve Tribes in precious stones; so Christ, our High-Priest, hath the names of all his Children in his heart, to present them alwayes to God by his intercession; so as when he now appears before God, the Church with him appears before God in his heart; The Father sees the Church in the heart and breast of CHRIST. Now as this, I say, is true in heaven, so upon the Crosse the Church was in the breast of Christ: There was but a certain number for whom Christ savingly laid down his life, *Paul* was in the breast of Christ when he shed his blood; [*Who loved me, and gave himselfe for me,*] So that then Christ loves some with a peculiar, speciall and superabundant love. Here then the Question is concerning,

1. *Generall love.*

2. *Generall gift.*

Quest.

Whether Christ loved all, and gave himselfe for all, because here the Apostle saith [*He loved me, and gave himselfe for me?*]

Ans. 1.

John 6. 37. 39.

John 6. 38.

John 17. 6.

I answer briefly; First, that Christs loving and giving himselfe was parallel in even lines with Gods love and gift; for Christ gives himselfe for none but those which God hath first given him; Christ had his commission, and he came to doe his Fathers will, not his own; and will save all whom his Father hath given unto him; as it is *John 17. 6, Thine they were, thou gavest them me.* Those that the Father gives in election, Christ redeems, and by redemption saves; for redemption in regard of efficacy, is no larger than Gods election; therefore he joynes, *Christ loved me, and gave himselfe for me.* His love is onely to those whom God gave him, for he looks upon all he dyed for, as they were in his Fathers love. There are a company in the world whom God hates; *Esau have I hated.* Here love and gift goe both together, he gives himselfe for no more than he loves, and he loves no more than God loves.

Rom 9. 13.

Ans. 2.

Again, whomsoever Christ did love and give himselfe for to death; there be other fruits which accompany this; they who have interest in Christs redemption, they have the spirit of application; where there is obtaining

obtaining by Christ any thing of God, there (I say) is grace to apply it by his Spirit; and many things go with it: *For them that he died for* (as the Apostle shews, *Rom. 8.*) *for them he rose again; and for them he sits at the right hand of God*; these go together: *For if he spared not his owne Sonne, but gave him to death for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things*? Where God gives Christ, he gives the spirit of application with him. But we see, that the greatest part of the world have not faith, for it is the faith of the Elect, which worldlings not having, nor the grace of application, therefore they have not the favour of God obtained by Christ: so it is written, *Ro. 5. 10. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life*; these goe together. Now the greatest part are not saved by his life, therefore they are not reconciled by his death.

Rom. 8. 17.
Rom. 8. 32.

Ma. 17. 13, 14.
2 Thes. 3. 2.

I

Other places doe cleare this truth, as *Hebr. 9. 14.* where is shewed, that where Christ hath offered up himself for any, there is also a purging of the conscience from dead workes, to serve the living God: But the most are not purged, therefore they have no interest in Christs death.

2

A strong reason is further shewed hereof, by Christ, *John 17. 9.* where he avouches plainly, and makes a main difference between two sorts of people, saying, *I pray for them, I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine.*

3

But here some may object, Christs death is of larger extent than his intercession.

Objct.

To cut off this objection, Christ sayes after in the same Chapter, *Verse 17. And for their sakes I sanctifie my self, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.* That is, I prepare and sanctifie my selfe to be a sacrifice, as a Priest; I prepare my selfe to be a holy sacrifice for such: therefore Christ sanctified himselfe for them, not for the world. Under the Law there was the Brazen Altar for sacrifice, and the golden Altar for Incense, which golden Altar for Incense was effectual for no more than the brazen Altar was for sacrifice: & Christ offered himselfe a sacrifice for all those that he makes intercession for. The point is clear, I will not answer all the Objections might be brought, only in counter with some of the main ones, which are brought by the Papists against this truth. Saint Pauls meaning therefore is not, That he loved me with that love wherewith he loved all mankind. The Apostle means a more speciall love, *He loved me so as he gave himselfe for me*: That is, with a more speciall love than he bears to all mankind. This is a point that tends to Gods honour and mans comfort, for God hath the more praise and thanks from his Elect, and those that are redeemed by the peculiarnesse of it; which, the more it is, the more they acknowledge themselves bound unto God & Christ. These are they that are elected, these are they for whom the Scriptures are, for whom the world stands and Christ came. They love God, and single him out, & the more they doe so, God doth so single them out to delight in, Peculiarity inhaun-

Ans.

Psal. 116. 1.

ceth and raiseth favours to higher degrees than otherwayes; the fewer that are taken out of the world from the refuse of mankind, the more their hearts are inflamed to love God again. God (as the Psalmist sayes) hath not dealt so with every Nation. When will a man be most thankful to God, and give him glory, but when he can say, Thou hast not dealt so with the rest of the world; what is in me more than in the rest of mankind? I differ nothing from them, but in thy peculiar love: hereupon comes the heart to be knit in love unto Christ again. But against this it will be objected.

Object.

Why doth Christ by the Ministry perswade all in the Church for to beleve in Christ, and for to beleve forgiveness of sins, if Christ did not die for them all?

Ans.

I answer, that in the Church he calls all, that he may cull out his own: The Minister speaks promiscuously both to the Elect, and those that are not, because God will not robb his own children of the benefit, though they are mingled with others, to whom the blessed things do not belong; as it is with the rain, it rains as well upon the Rocks of the Sea, and upon the barren heath; as upon the good ground: Why,

Simile.

for any good to the Rocks? No, but because, together with it, it rains upon the fruitful ground, which hath the benefit of the rain. So God rains the showrs of his Ordinances upon all, but the benefit thereof is only to his ground, not to the Reprobates. The Sun shines upon all, but who hath the comfort of that shining? Those who have eyes to see it only, and use it, not the blind; But to them that beleve not they have another use;

Simile.

they have this benefit by Christs death, that there is mercy offered them, and some gifts of the Spirit, God offers and stirs up good motions in them, but they rebel against them. There be many degrees and means of faith; they use not all the means they ought, neither take all the degrees, therefore they are without all excuse, because he gives more grace, (not only the means) but he is ready to give more grace than they are willing to entertain: so it is their rebellion which is the cause of their damnation. They are said to resist the holy Ghost, such Reprobates in the Church, to quench the Spirit: which implies, the holy Ghost is ready to work more in them than they are willing to entertain. Is it not so by experience? There is a company of profane persons, that out of the abundance of their wicked hearts, and the pollution of their breeding, will not vouchsafe to hear at all: Others that do come, (though for some by and carnall ends) happily the holy Ghost, in hearing, beats upon their consciences and awakes them. But what say their rebellious hearts? Shall I stoop to leave such & such courses that are pleasureable and gainful? Hereupon they resist the work of the holy Ghost in the Ministry, when their hearts tell them there is a readinesse in the holy Ghost, & that he is sent from Christ and the Father to work more effectually in them, than they are willing to be wrought upon, & therefore it is they are damned. *Thy perdition* (saith the Prophet) *is of thy self, O Israel!* their own consciences will tell them thus much; so it is no matter what cavils they raise of Christs intention, and Gods electi-

Acts 7.

How the wicked sling off the means of grace.

on.

on. Look thou man to thine own heart, doth not thy own heart tell thee thou art a rebell, and livest in prophane wicked courses, in neglect of holy duties? Thou carriest thine own sentence and cause of damnation in thy breast. I appeale to the worst, who live in sins against conscience, here is the ground of thy damnation; there be many ascents and degrees to saving faith, thou withstandest the beginnings and the motions of the Spi it, if they came in and work on thy heart any estrangement from sin, thy proud heart begins, to rebell, and will not yeeld: It is the only true obedience which layes it selfe at the foot of Christ, and is willing to be ledde and perswaded in any thing so far as frailty will permit, and allowes it self in no evill course. This is that which brings sound comfort, which they not doing, therefore are without all excuse.

Obedience
whats

If this were not so, they might object another day, Christ did not die for me, therefore why should I be damned for not beleevng?

Objct.

Their consciences therefore will tell them, that they used not all meanes to beleve, neither took the degrees of faith; for Gods Spirit doth work after a kind in wicked men, as in three bad grounds, the word was effectually in divers degrees; but when it comes to the upshot, they hated not their sinnes, were worldly minded; or the Plough had not made furrowes deepe enough to humble them, to value mercy and Christ above all things, and to hate sin above all; this is enough to justifie their condemnation, howsoever Christ is offered, and there is a command to beleve, yet their hearts tell them they doe not all they might: they must know, that Gods secret purpose in electing some, and redeeming some, and leaving others, it is hid from the world, as his secret will, that is not the rule of our obedience, but Gods revealed Will and Commandment: therefore men must looke unto what God commands if their conscience tell them that they yeeld not that obedience which they ought and might, but rather resist the motions of Gods Spirit, hereupon comes their damnation to be just: They are commanded to beleve; What? not to beleve remission of their sinns; for know,

Ans.

1. *There is the act of faith,* and
2. *The fruit of faith.*

Now a wicked man is not first commanded to beleve the forgiveness of his sinne, but in this order, in obedience to subordinate duty before; he is commanded to beleve that he shall have benefit by Christ, by yeelding obedience of faith to Christ: The act is one thing, and the fruit is another. Every one is bound to beleve and cast himselfe upon Christ for salvation, but not bound to beleve the fruit, unless they have the Act.

The unregenerate are not commanded to beleve remission of sin.

But it will be objected, We are not bound to have the first Act of faith to beleve, if we should, it were in vaine, we should beleve a lie.

Objct.

Answ. I say no, the Gospell runnes, Whosoever beleeves in Christ, shall have the fruits of the death of Christ, shall have everlasting life. Thus whosoever beleeves and casts himselfe upon Christ, doth the Act, shall have the fruit. Away with idle questions, what doth the fruit of Christs death belong to me? Did he die for me? Go thou to the Act, if thou hast grace to cast thy selfe upon Christ, and to assent when he offers and invites thee, it is well: Yeeld the Act of faith, and leave questioning of that, which is then put out of question. Reason not this, whether God hath elected, or Christ had dyed for thee, this is the secret Will of God; but the Commandement is, to beleieve in Christ, this binds, therefore yeeld to Christ when thou art called and bidden to cast thy selfe upon him, then thou shalt find, to thy souls comfort, the fruit of his death.

We must not
question, but
go to the Act
and fruit of
faith.

Caution.

Simile.

Let no man excuse himselfe by quarrelling against Christ, for not giving himselfe for all: There is no man condemned, but for not yeelding obedience in the Act of faith, and doing all that his heart tels him he might, but is unwilling to doe; it is for rebellion he perishes: As when a Malefactor is condemned, who hath a book given him to reade, which he refuses to doe, his not reading is the cause of his execution and death, as well as his ill deeds which he hath done; his refusing pardon, that he will not reade, with the other; both are causes of his death, because he doth not read, and because he is a Malefactor. So in this case, when a man will not yeeld the Act of faith, though his other sins will damne him, yet, if he would beleieve and take the mercy offered, his other sins would not damne him. If men would, or could beleieve, no other sinnes would hurt them, but because they doe not their other sins shall be laid to their charge, and their rebellion, that they will not beleieve, and take the benefit of Gods offer; they refuse mercy, because mercy cannot be had without conditions of obedience; as Christ reproves the Jewes, *John 3. 19. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darknesse rather than light because their deeds were evill.* This is the condemnation, (with a witnesse) the great and main cause of condemnation, they would have heaven, if they might have it with their lusts; but they will not yeeld to the Act of faith, to take Christ as he is offered unto them, upon his own terms, to be ruled by him, for better and for worse, this they will none of, which is that which damns them; they would single out of Christ what they list.

When Christ sent the seventy Disciples forth to preach and heale the sick, notwithstanding they were to be refused of many, as it is *Luke 10. 11.* yet they were taught by our Saviour, as to wipe off the dust of their feet against them, so also to convince them in this, that the Kingdome of Heaven was come near unto them. In vain therefore do wicked men and our adversaries cavil against Gods Justice in this, which every mans conscience shall accuse himselfe at last to be guilty of, and cleare God of; in that they would none of Wisedomes counsell, shutting their eyes against all instructions, refusing to be reformed This I thought

thought good to adde to avoid the snarling of wicked, carnall, profane persons.

The second Point is, That true faith doth answer this particular love and gift of Christ, by applying it to it selfe. True faith is an applying faith; there is a spirit of application in true faith; for God in the Scriptures offers Christ, and Christ offers himself in the Ministry to all that beleeve; hereupon comes faith to make Christ our own, it doth appropriate Christ to it selfe in particular. Christ is a garment, faith puts him on; Christ is a foundation, faith builds upon him; Christ is a Root, faith plants us in him; Christ is our Husband, faith yeelds consent, and consent makes the match. So then there is a particular truth that strikes the stroke betwixt Christ and us; [*He loved me, and gave himselfe for me.*] The nature of faith is to make generals become particulars, to restrain generals into particulars: for there is a particular cause, which must have a particular restraint, Christs love is propounded to all in generall, before it doe me good I must have a particular restraining faith for to make it my own; now the Papists are enemies to this particular faith, it being opposite to their opinions and Authors, save some of the honester, that incline to us. They say, that we ought to beleeve with a Catholike generall faith, that there is remission of sins for the Church, but not [*for me,*] for where say they is your name set downe in Scripture? they are against this special faith, because they know it is the ground of assurance, unto which they are enemies; this assurance also being an enemy to all their fooleries, forgeries, and courses they take to have assurance.

2. Point.

How faith applies and appropriates Christ in particular to ones selfe.

The nature of faith.

We must know more clearly, that there is a particular faith required of us; A Christian ought to say [*Christ loved me.*] Neither is this by any speciall revelation, for Gods Spirit doth witnesse ordinarily, first or last, so much to all that are his, except in some cases. Now that you may know this particular faith is aymed at by God in the Scripture, look what is the end of the Ministry and of the Sacraments. Are not we Ambassadors from God to men, to unfold Christs love in particular unto them; if they beleeve, then to tell them, that they may be assured of salvation? Doth not the Apostle, *Rom. 10. 9.* speak in particular, that, If thou shalt confesse with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt beleeve in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. This is spoken to every man in particular.

That the Ministry is given to raise and work in us particular assurance.

And for the Sacraments, what kind of faith doth Baptisme seal, when water is sprinkled upon the Child, doth it seal a general washing away of guilt? No, but a particular washing away of the guilt and filth of the sins of the party baptized. Wherefore are the Sacraments added to the Word, but to strengthen faith in particular? therefore every one in particular is sprinkled, to shew the particular washing of our soules by the blood of Christ. What is the reason, that the Sacrament of the Lords Supper is added to the Word, but that every one may be perswaded, that it is his duty to cast himself upon Christ, and to eate Christ, and to beleeve his own particular salvation? It overthroweth the

So the Sacraments

maine

The difference of believers wherein.

maine end of the Sacraments, to hold a confused faith in generall. Therefore seeing it is the main end of the Word and Ministry, let us labour for this particular faith, that we may say in speciall, *Christ loved me, and gave himself for me*: Nay [*for me*] if there had been no other men in the world but I. And the rather labour for this, because it is that which distinguisheth us from counterfeit Christians and Beleevers. For wherein is the main difference? It is in appropriation; true faith doth appropriate Christ unto it selfe, makes Christ a mans own. It being the nature of saving faith to draw the generall into particulars, which is meant by eating Christ, drinking his blood, and putting on Christ; all which enforce particular Acts of faith. But against this it will be said.

Object. Saint Paul had a speciall revelation, without which no man ought to beleve thus much.

Ans. I answer, He had no speciall revelation; for *Rom. 8. 38.* he enlargeth the comfort unto all; *For I am perswaded that neither death, nor life, nor Angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* It is idle to speak a speciall revelation, unlesse we call it so, as it is hid from the world; so every Christian hath a speciall revelation from the Spirit: For the Spirit which knows the secret things of God, and which knows his heart, testifies to him that he is a Child of God; and so he hath a speciall revelation; but not if we distinguish one Christian from another. Every true Christian hath this revelation, because they have the spirit of revelation, for which the Apostle prays, *Eph. 1. 17. For if we have not the Spirit of Christ, we are none of his.* Thus we have seen, that God loves some with a peculiar, and a speciall love. And secondly, that they have a speciall faith to make his love their owne.

3. Point.

The third Point is, That assurance doth spring from this particular faith, so that a Christian man may be assured of the love of Christ. But here divers Questions and Cases must be answered and explained to cleare the Point, else our speech shall not be answerable to the experience of Gods people, or the truth it self. First, we must know that there is a double Act of faith in the beleiving soule.

1. An Act of faith trusting and relying; and
2. An Act of assurance upon that Act of relying.

For it is one thing to believe and cast my self upon Christ for pardon of sins, and another thing upon that Act to feel assurance and pardon; the one looks to the Word more principally; the other is founded upon experience together with the Word: We ought to labour for both, for affiance & consent in the will, to cast our selves upon Christ for salvation; and then upon beleiving we ought to find and feel this assurance. But these many times are severed, & sometimes the first is without the second. The first brings us into the state of grace: A man may be

be in the state of grace, by giving consent to Christ, and relying on him for mercy, and yet want assurance of pardon, and reconciliation in the second place.

This falls out oft-times, especially in the new-birth, that in those struglings, when little grace strives with corruption, there the Spirit of God is exercised in the act, in yeelding the obedience of faith, to cast it self upon the arme of Christ, into the Bosome of Christ, and upon Gods mercy. As for any feeling, it doth not so much stand upon it at first, as it doth regard the Act: after which assurance it comes for a reward, as God sees it good.

1
One may be in the state of grace without this assurance, especially in the new-birth pangs.

Then again, it often falls out in the time of temptation, that the first act of affiance, it is without the act of perswasion or feeling, which requites more experience, when a Christian in the time of temptation, hath rather experience of corruption, and the wrath of God, having no experience of the contrary; yet he yeelds the first act of affiance with a particular faith, casting himself upon the mercy of Christ, and upon his death, for the comfort of redemption.

2
It falls out so in temptation.

But here a Question must be asked, What is the reason, that where the first act of faith is, to cast it self upon the mercy of Christ in the promises, that yet there is not the sence of pardon and reconciliation, nor that full perswasion: Why is this many times suspended?

Quest.

I answer, many causes there be of it, to name some.

First, in some the distemper of the body helps the distemper of the soule; I meane a melancholly temper, which is a constitution subject to distrust, feares, and temptations; as some tempers, that are of a bold spirit, are subject to presumption, the Devill suiting himselfe to their temper; so where there is this melancholly abounding (which is prone to feare and distrust) the Devill mingling his suggestions with their constitution, causes that those tempers are inclined to feare, where there is no cause of feare. They are carefull enough to doe their duties abundantly, as God doth discover his Will unto them; they cast themselves upon Gods mercy, and renounce themselves; humble souls only (out of distrust, helped by Sathan, applying himselfe to their distemper) they are kept in darknesse.

Ans. 1.
Distemper of body.

And also it is (many times) from a judgment not rightly perswaded, as when they think they have no faith, because they have it not in so great a measure: And when they are not rightly conceited of the Covenant of Grace, which requires truth for perfection, and not measure: For Christ will not quench the smoking Flax, he despiseth not the day of smal things, but cherisheth it; *Thou hast a little strength, saith he to the Church of Philadelphia, Rev. 3. 8. & hast kept my Word, yet they think (out of a spirituall covetousnesse) that they have none, because they have not so much as they would, and as stronger Christians have: they misconceit the Covenant of Grace, where truth goes for perfection; Sincerity is our perfection, which is known by a strife against the contrary, and by a desire of growth in the use of all means. There is not so much as truth, where there is not this; where the least is, there*

2
Ignorance of their conditions.

2
Of the covenant of grace.

Tryall of sincerity.

is this strife against the contrary, and a desire of growth in a further measure, by the use of meanes.

3 By reason of other cares. Also, they are held perhaps without this perswasion, and assurance of the pardon of their sin, because perhaps they are taken up with other cares; they do not value this so much as they should do; whereas this is another manner of gift than the most take it for. God vouchsafes not this sweet heaven upon earth, the sense of his love in Christ to any, but it is sought for long, and valued highly, that afterwards we may be thankfull for it.

4 By reason of ill company. Again, perhaps they are negligent in holy communion with those that are better than themselves: casting themselves into dead and dark company, that want life, who bring them into the same temper with themselves. Many other causes may be reckoned, why these acts are severed, that men, casting themselves in the spirit of obedience upon Christ, have not that assurance of the pardon and forgiveness of their sins. Hence we may give an answer to another question.

Quest. Why doe some Christians feelee more comfort than others do, who have the same meanes of grace?

Ans. I answer, Because God stirs up in some an higher esteeme of it, than others, they have more spirituall poverty.

2 Again, there is difference in the ages of Christians, some have had longer experience in the wayes of God, than others.

3 Again, men differ in their temper, some are of a more cheerfull temper; therefore there is a clearer manifestation which helps the work a little, the disposition of the outward man.

4 Again, Men differ in their worldly temper: Men, for want of Christian prudence, cast themselves too much upon the employments of the world, that they suffer the strength of their soule to be carryed so one way, that they have no time to gather assurance of salvation; howsoever, for the maine they are conscionable, yet many such are so worn out with the world, as they differ in heavenly mindednesse and want of care of this, so they differ in assurance and want of Gods love.

5 Again, as God hath a purpose to employ men, as he hath great and many things for some men to doe, so he suffers them to have a greater measure of assurance and pardon of sinne, because he intends they shall go through a great deal of businesse: those who he intends shall not go through such employments, he vouchsafes not unto them that portion of assurance; for these are distinct gifts of the Spirit, to give the spirit of faith, to cast our selves upon Christ, and to give the spirit of assurance, howsoever the spirit doth both; as 2 *Corinth. 2.* it teacheth us those good things that we have of God; yet sometimes the Spirit doth not so teach us the good things of God, as it inables to do the works of the Spirit, because God hath divers employments for Christians.

Quest. Another Question which some may move, is, Why oftentimes it comes to pass that Christians of greater parts, want assurance, and sometimes

times dye without it, when many times a weaker Christian of meaner parts have it? men of ordinary ranke doe many times dye with more assurance than their great Teachers. What is the reason it falls out that poor Christians of mean knowledg and gifts have a heaven upon earth, and enjoy a great deal of comfort when they end their dayes, men of greater parts dying more concealed?

I answer; Many reasons may be given. 1. Christians are prone too much to value gifts; and those that have, are much prone to be proud of them; and to think, that grace and gifts go together, when these are often severed: Men of excellent gifts have many times no grace at all; and are given them for the good of others, not for themselves being proud and barren all their dayes, not having any feeling of that they can largely talk of with glory to others: Because they value these things, and neglect grace, humility, faith, and broken spirits, which things God values more than all gifts; therefore you have men far above other in gifts and glory of the world, which want this assurance.

Answ.

But put the case they be good Christians, yet often they grow proud, and puffed up with great gifts, for the Apostle sayes, *Knowledge puffs up*.

Quest.

Again, when there is a great deal of good parts in knowledg, there is oftentimes great inquisition made after things which should not be looked after; and many impertinences, wanting knowledge and experience in that which they should more look after.

Answ.

1

Then againe, men of greater gifts may out of some error look for comfort too much in sanctification, and in the Covenant of works, more than in faith. A poor Christian perhaps, (out of right judgement) when he stands in need of comfort, may seek it in faith, in justification, casting himselfe upon Christ; when another man thinking to find his comfort more in graces and gifts, than in casting himself upon Christ in justification, he may justly be deprived of that comfort: whereas we honour God most (whatsoever our graces are) in casting our selves upon Christ, and ending our dayes in mercy, making our appeale to mercy: whereas the graces of sanctification and excellent parts, are excellent for the good of others, but if we place too much affiance in them, it is just with God we should oftentimes goe mourning to our Graves: Therefore we must set them in a right place, take them as signes and evidences of our comfort; but not forget to relye rightly on our free justification, and the fruits thereof, as the foundation of comfort; which made Saint Paul, *Phil. 3. 8.* count all things but dung and drosse in comparison of the righteousness of Christ.

2

Then again, God doth it to shew his freedom, that to whom he pleaseth he will give more assurance, to shew that he is a free giver: our salvation is according to his good pleasure, so is the feeling of it; some shall have more, some lesse, God will sometimes manifest his comforts and feeling more to weak Christians, than others, as a father or mother shews the greatest love to the weakest childe: God knowes that strong Christians have other things to support them with, than feelings; they can go back, as holy David doth, to former experiences, and

Similit.

1
Why some
want feeling
so long.
2

relye upon the Word and promise strongly; so he suffers them to support themselves with stronger things than present feelings: These who are weakest, he vouchsafeth unto them the sweet feeling of his love, as Parents dandle and study most to please the sickest and weakest Children. But we should leave this to God, who gives us what measure he will, and at what time he will: Some he thinks good to keep a long time from feeling this assurance to humble them, for being too bold with sin: and some likewise he will keep longer from this assurance, perhaps all the dayes of their life; because they have been too confident heretofore in touching and meddling with petty sins; which, as pitch and fire, hath burnt and defiled them too much; in the mean time supporting them with sufficient grounds of a happy estate, notwithstanding their infirmities: they may be as good Christians after a fall as ever, though perhaps never attaine unto that feeling and sense which formerly they enjoyed; for though they have not feeling, yet they may have strong faith, as Christ upon the Crosse had strong assurance without feeling, when he said, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* Thus we see that assurance may be obtained.

Quest.

Now we come to a more principall Question, How we may know whether we have the Act or no? the first Act to yeeld the obedience of faith; for that is the main: perhaps a Christian may dye in the rage of a Fever, or in child birth, and never have strong assurance, many goe to heaven that never have it.

Ans. 1.
By a reflect
Act.

But for the first, a man may know in his right temper, that he performs the act of faith in assurance, by the reflect Act of his soule, if it be not hindred, let him returne upon himselfe; as, How doe I know I understand a thing, when I doe conceive it? Why, by a faculty the soul hath to know it understands: so how doth a soul know that it beleeves, but by a reflect Act of the soule, whereby it knowes it beleeves, when it doth beleeve, especially when the soul is in a right temper? If a naturall soul knows it understands, when it understands, and loves when it loves; so doth the soul by the Spirit, know that it beleeves when it doth beleeve; If (as I said) the soul be not distempered, it is the nature of the conscience to bear witness of the Act of it selfe; and (usually) Gods Spirit, together with the conscience doth discover it.

Rom. 8. 16.

2
By the fruit.

But the safest course is to go to the fruit: Know, thou hast the Act of faith by the fruit; to name one now, (because in the next point I shall have occasion to speak more of it.) The fruit of this Act is seene especially in the greatest temptation; for if a man have a spirit of prayer, then to go to God, and have boldness in extremity, certainly he beleeves; for faith is the cause of prayer, prayer is the breath and flame of faith: where there is the spirit of prayer, there is alwayes the spirit of faith; where there is boldnesse to go to God, there certainly is the Spirit, whereby we may be assured that we have the Spirit of Adoption, howsoever we finde not so evident witness that we are the sons of God. Yet if we have liberty and boldnesse to goe to God in extremity, it is a signe there is the spirit of faith; as we may see in David, *Psal.*

The spirit of
faith.

Psal. 31. 22. For I said in mine haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes. nevertheless thou heardest the voyce of my supplication, when I cryed unto thee. He said, he was cut off, yet he cryed unto God when he was in temptation, though his flesh yeelded, and said he was cut off from God, and that he was not the childe of God; yet there was a better principle within him to pray, *neverthelesse I cryed unto thee: so saith Job, Though he kill me, yet will I trust in him.* Job wanted this assurance and feeling, yet notwithstanding see the Act of this faith, *Though he kill me, I will trust in him.* When in extremity we can trust God, and goe boldly to the Throne of grace, and not sink in despaire, it is a sign that we are in the state of Grace, and yeeld the Act of faith, though we find not that sweet feeling, at length God will be mercifull to us; so that after we have yeelded the Obedience of faith, we shall find the assurance.

But at what time specially?

First, especially when a man hath yeelded the Act of faith, and cast himselfe upon God, and a long time lived by faith, then God will seale this beleeving with the spirit of adoption; when we beleevé specially against a temptation of distrust, then we usually have the sealing of the Spirit.

Then again, when we have striven with any corruption a long time, God, as a reward of our holding out, will crown our faith, and our obedience with a sweet sense of his love; after that Job had strove a long time, at length concluding, *Though he kill me, yet will I trust in him*; God manifested himselfe in Mercy unto him. The woman of Canaan after she had striven and wraisted with Christ, at last gets a gracious answer: so when we can subdue our corruptions, and perform holy duties in some strength of grace, in reward of our diligence and care, we have some comfortable revelation of the Spirit, and taste of the life to come more than ordinary; God crowning our diligence with the sweet sense of his love.

And also, when he hath some great employment for us, to encourage us the more, he will give us the more evidence and manifestation of his love, more ravishment; as the Disciples which were with Christ in the Mount, they did see his glory there, because they were to see him abased afterwards. Those that God means to honour, and use in any great employment, oftentimes before, he gives them the full assurance of his love.

Again, sometimes in the midst of sufferings to reward our faithfulness, as Paul in the dungeon was so filled with joy, as to sing at midnight; to encourage us, that whatsoever our threatnings and torments shall be in our sufferings for the name of Christ, yet if we yeeld obedience to God, our comfort shall be more than our discomfort, as St. Paul had the spirit of glory which raised him above his abasement. Thus we see when they are severed, and when God pleases for to vouchsafe the Manifestation together with the Act.

Now I come to the fourth and last Point, (indeed the chief of all) that

Quest

Ans. 1.

When we have a long time lived by faith.

2

After a long strife with a corruption:

3

When he hath some great employment for us.

4

In midst of our sufferings.

4. Point:

this

Discovery of
Gods love to
us, is the flame
of faith, & our
love to him to
raise assurance.

this particular faith in obedience to Christ, with assurance of his particular love, is that which carries us along all our life of faith unto the day of death; *I live* (saith he) *this life of faith in the Son of God*; Why, what makes him to do so? Oh, I have good cause to love Christ, and to depend upon him; why? *He hath loved me, and given himselfe for me*, and I feel so much to my soules comfort, therefore I will wholly depend upon him, in life, in death, and for ever. And indeed particular special faith, if it be joyned with some assurance, it is the ground of living by faith. No man can live a holy life by faith, but first he must know that God loves him, and Christ loves him. Holy Actions spring from love, and are directed by love to the right end, which only love moveth us to intend. How can any spirit ayme at his glory whom he loves not first? can any soule, not knowing whether Christ loves it or not, intend Christs glory as it should doe?

Quest.

I beseech you, if we speak of doing or suffering, thankfulness or cheerfulness (especially at the houre of death) whence come all these?

Ans.

Come they not from some taste of Gods love? when doe we love, but when many sins are forgiven? and when are we willing to suffer any thing for Christs sake, but when we know that he hath suffered so great things for us? We count it a glory to suffer any thing for Christ, when we know, He hath loved us, and given himselfe for us.

Quest.

Again, for thankfulness, how can a man be thankfull for that he hath no knowledge of? What makes a man thankfull for the great work of redemption in Christ, but a particular faith?

Ans.

This made Saint Paul and the rest of the Apostles so often to break out, *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*. He breaks out into thanksgiving, that he, together with other Christians, had the Spirit, which doth perswade them of God and Christs particular love. Then againe for thankfulness for ordinary blessings, how can a man thanke God for any ordinary blessing, if he be not assured that it comes from the love of God in Christ? when he is perswaded of this, then he can give thanks; both for the principall, and other lesser favours.

Objection of
an unbelieving
soul.

Ans.

He may think else, what is all this to me? I am but fatted against the day of slaughter; It is good for me to take my pleasure whilst I may enjoy these things, to think I am but as a Traytor, who hath the liberty of the prison? This smothers our thankfulness.

It is the beleieving soul that is thankfull for mercies, and also cheerfull in duties; whence come Christians to be a voluntary people, zealous of good works; as, Tit. 2. the Apostle sets zeal betwixt faith and works, looking both wayes, saying, *The grace of God which bringeth salvation unto all men hath appeared* (by the first coming of Christ, and giving him to death) *teaching us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts*: here faith looks backwards: then looking forward, sayes he, *Looking for, and waiting for the appearance of the blessed God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath redeemed us, that we might be a peculiar people, zealous of good works*.

Whenoe

Whence comes a zeal to good works, but when we look to the grace that hath brought salvation and redemption from our sins, and to the glorious coming of Christ?

Quest.

When faith looks both these wayes, it is set a fire, it makes us zealous; as *Heb. 9. 14.* When the heart is sprinkled with the Bloud of Christ in the forgiveness of sins; then we serve the living God, and are a voluntary and a cheerfull people, when our hearts are enlarged with assurance.

Answ.

Further, What makes a man ashamed of his evill life? What breeds those affections of repentance, grief and shame, mentioned *Ezek. 36.* *Then shall ye be ashamed, &c.*

Quest.

When God had once pardoned their sinnes, and given them many favours, then shall ye be ashamed that ye have served me thus and thus, and grieve that ye have departed from me. So that then do Christians come to have these two penall affections of shame and grief, the two ingredients to true repentance: Why? *Christ hath loved me, and given himself for me.* As if one should say, Hath he done so? was my sins the cause of his death, and did his love move him? I am ashamed that I have offended so gracious and so a sweet a Saviour. It makes a man weep over Christ; It was my sinnes which caused his death and torments. This particular faith fills the soul with all Divine graces, and it follows Christ, and sees that he did all for us; then a man sees that Christ was borne for him, *To us a Child is born, and to us a Son is given.* It follows Christ in his whole life, and so all that he did was for me: his death, *He dyed for me;* his sweating in the Garden was for me, my sins caused it; so I see his love, and the foulness of my sinnes. He was thrust through the side for me, and cryed upon the Crosse, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* my sinnes had an active power there: He rose again for me, he is now in heaven for me, as carrying me in his breast. The sight and consideration of this draws the soul again unto Christ in repentance for sins, and in all holy duties whatsoever. This is the reason why those Christians that have been pulled out of the fire, and converted oftentimes by a violent conversion, are the most fruitfull and loving Christians, as *S. Paul* and others; because they know Christ hath forgiven them a mighty debt, a thousand Talents; the more which debt appears to be, the more they know they are bound to God; and to sacrifice and give up themselves to Jesus Christ, that hath discharged so great a debt for them.

Answ.

Esay. 9.

When they consider his wonderfull love to such as they are, they are inflamed with love again; as in the Gospel, the woman who had many sins forgiven her, therefore she loved much. The Prodigal young unthrift in the Gospell, for whom the Fat Calfe was provided, no question, he could not satisfie himselfe in expressions. God sometimes provides fat Calves, great measures of comfort, even for Prodigals, and they of all, shew most love, they cannot tell how to satisfie him by any pains taking; *The love of Christ (saith Paul) constraines me, a holy violence moves me, who was a persecutor & a blasphemor:* So the sense of the love of Christ in pardoning of sins, will constrain one to a holy

Gods love inflames us with love.

violence, in the performing of all duties. Why, if any base ends come into a mans mind, in that is a Christian to regard himselfe, to seek his own ease, honour, pleasure? No, this consideration (if he have any assurance of the pardon of his sins) will move him to the contrary: Christ died for me; shall I not live to Christ, live to him that gave himselfe for me? seek his honour that abased himselfe for me? so that it quells all base ends, the consideration of Christs particular love.

Discovery of
the love of
Christ in par-
ticular stirs up
bounty.

So it stirs us up to be at cost for Christ, and for his Church, at any cost, to sacrifice our *Isaacks*. He loved me, and gave himselfe for me; is any thing then I can give, satisfactory? He gave himselfe for me, therefore I will give my selfe for him; This will make a man prodigall, even of his blood, for Christs sake. When a man is moved to be discontented with his estate, and to doubt of Gods Providence in particular things, this will help, *Christ hath loved me, and given himselfe for me*; will he not give me all necessaries, who hath given himselfe? So that this stirs up to all duties, cuts the sinewes of all spirituall sins, of distrust in Gods Providence, and all base ends. It stirs me up in particular practice of holy life, to goe to him for all graces: I have himselfe, therefore he will give me his Spirit and grace; I have the field, therefore I shall have the Pearl; he hath given me himselfe, he will give me therefore all that he hath, his Spirit, Graces and Priviledges, all shall be mine.

Discovery of
this particular
love is also a
compelling
argument.

Thereupon it is used in all *Pauls* Epistles, as a compelling argument, As Elect, and by the mercies of God do this: moving them to all spirituall duties from the love of God in Christ. And dearly beloved, you are dearly beloved, the love that Christ bears you, cost him deare indeed; it is a strong inforcement. Saint *Peters* argument to this effect is very strong; *You are not bought with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Jesus Christ are we redeemed from our vain conversation.* You see then (I give you but a taste of it) what strong motives here are to live a holy life, and all fetched from particular assurance, because *Christ loved me, and gave himselfe for me*. Hereupon (by the way) we may have a strong argument against the Papists, who hold we cannot have particular assurance, for, That which is brought as an argument to stir up to holy duties, must be knowne of us. The Arguments in this case, which serve to perswade, must be known; we do not perswade another to a duty by those arguments he is ignorant of. Here he speaks to Christians, as taking it for granted, that they knew they were elected of God: and dearly beloved in Christ, that which is an argument stirring up to duty, must be known better than the duty, because therefore this is an argument that stirs us up to all kind of duties whatsoever; therefore we may be assured. But here a Question may be asked;

Quest.

Doth not a holy life & holy actions, sometimes proceed from a soul not fully assured? then what shall we think of those good works that proceed from a Christian without strong assurance? If all obedience in doing and suffering (that is pleasing) comes from faith & assurance, then what shall we think of such works as proceed not from it? If you aske many a good Christian, what assurance have you that Christ hath given himselfe

himself for you? they will perhaps stagger at it; for a humble broken hearted Christian is subject to speak worse of himselfe than there is cause, though he be diligent in good workes; what shall we think of such workes then, when therewith they are not assured of Christs love in particular?

I answer, There can no holy life proceed but from faith; from the first act of it; (there must be that) but sometime we know not our faith, because the reflect act is hindered; we know not we beleieve when we beleieve. There may holy duties proceed from a man when he knows not his grace and estate: In which time let him but examine himselfe, Why doth he duties, whether out of love to God or no? yes: Can he endure God to be evill spoken of? no: Will he allow himself in any known sinne? no. In this case, though he dares not say he is assured, yet the things he doth are from some love and desire of glorifying God. Christians do not know their estates often in such cases, they doe work from a secret perswasion of Gods love, though they know it not; he hath that he thinks he hath not, he works from that he thinks he doth not work from: He works from love to God, when he thinks he doth not, because he thinks he hath not so much as he would have: he works from grace, when he thinks he hath none. A child lives when it knowes not that it doth live; a child when it draws nourishment from the mothers breast, doth not know it lives it self, but the lookers on doe, because they see the actions of life: so a Christian doth not know that he lives the life of grace, when lookers on do, because they see spiritual hunger in him, and attending upon the means. Now he himself doth not see it, because of some spirituall covetousnesse, temptation or desertion which is upon him: Yet that is a true and gracious action, which issues from a soule that discovers faith, howsoever it selfe cannot be assured of its estate, there being for the time a suspension of it, through ignorance or other causes: but certainly in such there is faith in the first act of obedience, and some assurance, where there are actions of spirituall life, though they have not that they covet to have.

The best way is to labour for both, for assurance, and for the act it selfe; for howsoever those who have the act onely, performe good obedience; yet is not so large, so thorow, so cheerfull as it would otherwayes be. We ought to desire both that God would give us a spirit of faith, and discover himself unto us, that our sinnes are pardoned, and that we are accepted to life, to give us strong assurance, that so we may be more plentifull in the work of the Lord. There is no Christian who hath a good heart, but he will labour for the second as well as the first; he will labour to make his calling and election sure by all meanes, that God may have more glory, and smell a more sweet sacrifice from him, and that he may have more comfort in this world. Howsoever without assurance much good may be done, yet not so much, as when there is full assurance, for then the soule is carryed amaine in obedience to God, doing and suffering is nothing then.

Now for the Uses of this, seeing that the perswasion of Christs love

Ans^r

A tryall of true grace, when the reflect act of faith is hindered.

Simile

A stop of the reflect act.

Labour for both.

Use 1st

to

That this is no
doctrine of
presumption
or security.

to us in speciall is the spring of all holy life. This serves (in the first place) to free this doctrine of assurance from scandall. Assurance then it is not the ground of presumption or security : These springs not from a particular faith, for a holy life (the clean contrary) springs from it. None can live a holy life but by a particular faith ; and whosoever in particular doth beleve the forgivenesse of his own sins, will live a holy life, and not put himselfe into former bondage. It is a sign he is not that person for whom Christ gave himselfe, that doth inthrall himself into his former courses, unlesse he repent. We see those of the Israelites, who had a mind to goe back again into *Egypt*, did all perish in the *Wildernes*; and those in *Babylons* captivity, who would not come out when they were called, did perish. It is pittie they should ever be delivered, that are in love with bondage; those that will, serve and be slaves still, it is pittie but their ears should be boared to perpetuall servitude. Some will live in their finnes, and yet think that Christ dyed for them. No, whom Christ loves in particular, he gives them grace to leade a holy life, and to be freed from the bondage of their former corruptions ; those that are not redeemed from their vain conversation, are not redeemed from hell and damnation, unlesse God give repentance : those both goe together. Therefore let it be also a Rule of trying and discerning, whether we truly beleve that Christ loved us, and gave himselfe for us, by our care to live to him, and to give our selves to him back again by a holy life. Wheresoever the one is, there is the other, This is that which may stop the mouths of many, and will shame them at the day of judgement, (notwithstanding all their boasting, that God is merciful, & Christ dyed for them) Oh their hearts will tell them, But I have not cared to have the fruit of Christs death in the governing of his Spirit ; I would not have him my King; my conscience tels me, I would not have Christ upon those terms: he offered himselfe to rule me, the Minister told me of the danger, but I have preferred some base lust or other, such and such a course before Christ; I hated to be reformed, I flattered my selfe with hope of mercy, on no ground at all, therefore I never had any benefit by him.

Tryall of
Christs love.

Use 2.
To labour for
a particular
faith.
How to be
quickened and
set a fire with
Divine love.

To make another Use, If particular faith & assurance be the ground of a holy life, let us labour for it by all means ; and, let those that are in the state of Grace, let them come to this fire if they will be kindled: if they find themselves dull to holy duties, let them come to this fire. Are we dead spiritually? are we not so enlarged as we should be? why, come & consider of the infinite love of God in giving his Son for thee; and the sweet love of Christ in giving himselfe for thee ; and dwell in the meditation of this love : Do not let thy heart goe off the consideration of Christs sweet love, in stooping so low, not only in becoming man, but so low as hardly ever creature was, and all in love: should not this kindle love in us again? So much the more dearer he should be unto us, the more base he was for us. When we have warmed our frozen hearts with the consideration of his particular love towards us, then we adde fire to holy duties. Iron when it is warm, is fit for any impression; so

Simile.

so our cold hearts (though stiffe of themselves) being warmed and fired by the love of Christ, are fit to receive any impression, and to do, and to suffer any thing.

When we find our selves backward to suffer any thing for Christ, consider that Christ gave himselfe; or, if we be not thankfull and fruitfull enough, consider what was the end of Christs giving himselfe, that we should serve him in holinesse and righteousness all the dayes of our lives, without feare; and being freed from the feare of death, damnation, and slavish feare, that we should serve him cheerfully in the spirit of adoption and love. I beleech you in all indispositions of soules, let us make use of this, to come unto Jesus Christ. Experience teacheth any one, when are they fittest for suffering, doing of any duty, to resist a sinfull temptation to discontent, or murmuring? even when they enjoy the assurance of Christs love, and can read their own evidence, that they are Gods Children, and the Members of Christ, then they are fit for any thing, Therefore we should (as the Apostle Peter exhorts us) *give all diligence to make our calling and election sure*; it is a thing which requires all diligence: And the reason why we have it no more, is, because we do not give all diligence to attain it: It requires our utmost indeavour, being of the greatest consequence, by which God hath most honour, and we most comfort, because it makes us most fruitfull in our conversation.

So for suffering.

2 Pet. 1.

But you will say, what then shall we say unto those, who cannot say in particular that Christ loved them, and gave himself for them? What course shall they take, who have not this particular assurance and faith what grounds have they to come to Christ, if they be willing?

Objct.

I answer, Those that have it not, should labour to have it by all means whatsoever.

Ans.

But what ground have I, who have been a wretched sinner, an unworthy wretch, what ground have I for to meddle with Christ, and to beleeve that he loved me, and gave himselfe for me?

Objct.

Consider, even the vilest that can heare me have the Gospel offered unto them. Again, consider that Christ took thy nature, and how many inducements are there in this, for thee to take degrees of this particular faith, to come to it, that thou maist be in this estate, to glorifie God, and to enjoy comfort.

Sol. 1.

The Gospel is preached, and Christ offered unto all.

Hath not Christ taken thy nature, not the nature of Angels? oughtest not thou to think that he loves mankind, and why not thee, if thou wilt come in and cast thy selfe upon him? he is Jesus, a Saviour, and Christ, anoynted of God, and Emanuel, to reconcile God and man together.

2
Christ hath taken thy nature.

Besides thou saist thou art a sinner; why, but alas, what are thy sins? is not his righteousness above them? his righteousness is the righteousness of God-man, of a Mediator that is God, therefore far above thy sins. Considering then the excellency of his person, beleeve that the blood of Christ is able to purge thee from all.

3
His righteousness above all thy sins.
Heb. 9.

For a further ground for this particular faith, we may think of this inviting of all those who are unworthy; *Whosoever will, let him come and*

4
Thou art invited.
drink.

When Christ
invites.

drink of this water of life freely, Revel. 21. yea, those that think themselves farthest off, he bids them come, *Come all that are weary and heavy laden, &c.* If thou findest sin a burden, then Christ invites thee, and sends his Minister to beseech thee to be reconciled. Those that stand at the staves end, he desires them to lay aside their weapons, and come in.

Thou art
commanded
to believe.

If that will not doe, he layes his charge and command upon you to beleeve. If you will not beleeve, you adde this sin unto all the rest; this is his commandement that you should believe, or else you are rebels to his commandement: Nay, he counts it a sin worse than the sin of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, a crying sin, not to come in when the Gospel is proclaimed. Therefore never pretend your sins are great and many, but because of his offer, invitation, and command, it being without all restraint of person, sin, and time: even now (whatsoever thou hast been & art) seeing at whatsoever time a sinner repenteth, there is no restraint of any sin (but the sin against the holy Ghosts) if thou therefore come not in, and cast thy selfe upon Christ, to be ruled by him hereafter, thou hast nothing at all to pretend; it is not the greatnesse of thy sins, but thy willingness to be still in thy sins which hinders thee; for the greater thy sins have been, the greater will his glory be in forgiving; *Where sin abounded, there (saith the Apostle) grace superabounded so much the more.*

Where sin
abounds,
grace super-
abounds
much more.

Is it not for the honour of the Physitian or Chyrurgion, to cure great diseases and sore wounds? A mighty God and Saviour loves to do mighty things; *He loved me, and gave himselfe for me.* Did Paul find mercy? who then should despair, when such find mercy? He had sinned against the first Table by blasphemies, and against the second by oppression and persecution; who shall despair then, when such as he and *Manasses* shall find mercy? Therefore in any case come in, and the greater glory Christ shall have by thy coming. Doe not flatter thy selfe with this, as if thy sins and unworthinesse were such, as God cannot shew mercy to such a wretch as thou art, (or at least will not) no, no, deceive not thy self; examine thine own false heart, and thou shalt find thou art in love with thy sins, and wilt not leave them; and this will be alledged at the day of judgment against thee, by thine own conscience, that thou wast more in love with thy sins than with the mercies of God in Christ, and therefore didst willingly remain in thy infidelity: This is the true cause (indeed) of thy backwardnesse, and not the greatnesse of thy sins. You see then that there is ground sufficient for any sinner to come in, and labour for this particular assurance.

The love of
sin keeps us
off.

Objct.
Sol.

But put the case I be not one that Christ redeemed, & God elected. Away with disputing, and fall to obey; put this Question out of question, by beleeving and obeying; Come in and stoop unto Christ, and then it will appeare that thou art one that Christ dyed for, for he gives himselfe for all that beleeve in him: Doe thou thy duty, bring thou thy heart to rest upon Christ, and to be ruled by him; and then thou wilt put this Question out of question, that thou art one of Gods Elect: The Devill holds many in a state of darknesse by this delusion.

Objct.

If I knew that I were elected, or that Christ dyed for me, then I could beleeve.

Secret

Secret things belong unto God, revealed things to us, saith *Moses*. Thy duty is, when thou art sought for, invited, intreated, and commanded to be reconciled, then to come in and yeeld obedience, and in yeelding thereof, thou shalt find the fruit of Christs redemption, that thou art one for whom he gave himselfe. Thus much is for those who want this particular assurance.

Well then, (to draw to an end) for those that pretend they have a particular faith and assurance of Salvation, by this they shall know it : these things will follow.

Then thou hast a care to live by faith in the Son of God daily ; and in all estates and conditions : and where this faith and assurance is, it is with care and conscience of duty alwayes. Herein it is distinguished from a false conceit ; where there is no conscience of duty, there is no assurance of particular faith: This particular hath its ground from the generall, from the Word of God. The Word saith, that Christ gave himselfe for all beleevvers; now I know I do beleieve : he loves all those that love him, and I know I love him, therefore I am beloved of him. Thus true faith goes to the conditions of the Word ; those that live in courses contrary to the Word have not this faith. *Be not deceived* (saith the Scripture) *neither whoremonger, adulterer, nor unclean person, shall inherit the Kingdome of God.* But I am such a one, (saith a wicked man) and yet I think to enter into heaven, and that God will be mercifull. No, in this case he will not be mercifull, because one thus concludes wrongly, by a diabolicall perswasion, contrary to the Word.

Againe, this is with conflict, you may know particular application (where it is) to be good, because it is with conflict against temptations. A man never enjoyes his own assurance of Christs particular love, but with a great deale of conflict. There are two grounds that faith layes.

1. That generall truth, that *whosoever casts himself upon Christ shall be saved.*

2. The particular application hereof, but, *I cast myself upon Christ, therefore I shall be saved.*

This particular application (which is the work of faith) is mightily assaulted, more than the general. The devil is content that a man should believe the former, but he troubles us in the application, *But I beleieve.* He hinders, what he may, the reflect Act, that we may not say, I know I beleieve. Thus wheresoever the sense of Christs love is, there is a mighty conflict before it comes. The Devill labours by all means to hinder application, for he knowes, that particular faith brings Christ home, which is all in all. But false Christians go on in a smooth course, are not thus assaulted from day to day, they hope well, not considering, that whilest the strong man keeps the hold, all things are in peace ; whereas there is no Christian but he finds his particular faith strongly assaulted, more than his generall : Which is the reason why these two equall truths are not equally believed, because Satan doth hinder application, the minor assuming part more than the generall. Those who have no conflict, may feare they have no faith at all, God in wrath and justice

suffering

How to know
that we have
this particular
assurance.

I
Such endeavor
to live by
faith, in all
estates and
conditions

2
It is with much
conflict against
temptation.

Faiths argu-
ment.

Why equall
truths are not
equally belie-
ved.

suffering them to goe on in a smooth un-interrupted state. But all who have experience, know what this spirituall conflict (with an unbeleeving heart) meanes, when it comes to application.

3
By willingness
to search our
selves and be
searched by
others.

Again, a man may know his faith to be true, by his willingness to search himself, and to be searched by others. He that hath a true sound faith and particular assurance from thence, is willing oftentimes to search his heart, he would be better and better, labouring to examine himselfe, and to be examined of others. Those who are willing to go on in a still smooth course, because they will not break the peace of their own deluding false hearts, rather thinking all well, than to put themselves to the tryall, we may know this is but presumption. Where there is true application, there is alwayes willingness to search our own evidence; nay, a Christian will be willing when he cannot find his own evidence, to have the help of other Christians to reade his evidence for him, and to tell him of his estate, and is inquisitive, especially when he meets with the skilfull in those things.

4
There is a
high admira-
tion and pri-
zing of the
love of God
in Christ.

Again, this particular faith it is with a high prizing and admiration of the love of God in Christ, [*Who loved me, and gave himself for me.*] It is a signe that he hath no interest in this love, that prizes and values other things above it. If one had any assurance of this, he would value it above all other things in the world. He knows, that howsoever Christ gives other things, riches, kingdomes, and honours to cast awayes, that yet Christ gives himselfe to none but his deare Children; Therefore when he knows that he hath interest in Christ, he values him above all things in the world, will part with all rather than with his interest in him; When others goe on with a generall conceit, that Christ dyed for them, and loves them, or howsoever, that yet (come what will) they will goe on in their pleasures and profits, though their hearts tell them, there is something higher in their soules, than Christ and his love. You see then that we may all come in, who will, there is ground enough to draw them on, if they be not false to their own comfort, and how we may try whether we be assured, or not.

Exhortation. I beseech you therefore, as we desire to do any thing that may please God, labour for particular faith and assurance: Would we have our whole course of life to stink before God? I tell you, without this faith it is not possible to please God. Would we have all our life to passe fruitfully, and nothing to run upon our account when we are to dye? Oh pray that the Lord would increase our faith; above all, labour for particular faith and assurance, for there is nothing Sathan opposes us more in. It is a happy estate, a heaven upon earth. If Sathan doth oppose it most, and it be our greatest happinesse we can enjoy; It is worth the labouring after.

An item for
broken-hear-
ted Christi-
ans.

Psal. 37.

Let especially those that have ground & cause to be assured (humble broken hearted Christians) let them by all means not yeeld to Sathan, so much as to obscure the beauty of a Christian life, & to weaken the good things in others, who see them so mopish and cast downe, as though Christianity were a life of perpetuall sorrow, and not rather of perpetuall

perpetuall rejoycing. Our blessed Saviour indeed shewes, that mourners are blessed, but it is (chiefly because it tends and ends in joy. There is a command, to rejoyce evermore, but no where is it written, Mourn continually. Every one therefore ought to expresse by all means this assurance in the beauty of a holy life. Therefore, those who make conscience of holy duties, and of their wayes, let them not yeeld to temptations of this kind. If we be in such darknesse, let us not trust unto our own judgement, but let us trust the judgement of others; oftentimes others know more by us, than we by our selves. We ought to yeeld much to the discerning of Christians in this kind. It is an easie matter when all things goe well with us, in a right current, having some feeling, then to have comfort, and to be fruitfull; but when we are in our dumps, and in the houre of temptation, then it is not so easie. When a tree beares a great deal of fruit and abounds with leaves, it is an easie matter to say, This is a fruitfull tree; but when in winter the Sap falls to the root, is covered with Snow and Frost, the leaves shaken off, and the root, that is unseen, lies hid; then it requires some judgement and former experience to say, This tree hath life, and is fruitfull: though now there appears none: So a Christian may be in such an estate, that he requires the judgment of some others to look upon him. When (in such a case) he must goe to former times, for Gods love is constant alwayes like himselfe.

In some cases we must be censured by others, not our selves.

Simile.

And go to the secret working of grace, when outwardly there appears little, goe to the pulses; as, if we would know whether a man who is in a swoond hath life and breath, we goe to feel the pulses, to see if there be any breath remaining: so in a case of desertion, or seeming deadnesse of spirit, try which way goes the soule in the desires of it; is there not a desire to please God? are there not groanes and indeavours with those desires? are not those desires restless, and thy soul unsatisfied? Thou dost not content thy self with a little faith, but thou desirest more and more, and thou art ashamed, because thou hast so little. This is the pulses beating, and the breathings of a living soul. Yeeld not to Sathan, who tels thee there is no ground for thee to be assured of thy estate; where we find these evidences of a living soule, we ought to beleeve there is true life there, which I speak to those, who, without cause are carried to doubt of their estates.

Look to the pulse of grace.
Simile.

And do not tie Christ to thy conditions; If I had feeling and joy, I could beleeve, and be cheerfull; if God would send a Messenger from heaven, an Interpreter, one of a thousand unto me, or if I had those supernaturall swavities that some others have found, and those joyes; or were not corruption so busie with me, and I so prone to be overtaken by them.

Object.

But I say unto thee, know this for thy comfort, that whilest thou art cloathed with flesh, two fountains will have two streames, that which, is born of the flesh, will be flesh, and that which is borne of the Spirit will be Spirit still. Informe thy judgement, mistake not, neither say thou wilt not be comforted unlesse thou find such a through mortification of thy corruption, as admits no strong combustion.

Sol.
Two fountains will have two streams.

Quest. Shall *S. Paul* that chosen Vessell, have cause to cry out, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* and canst thou think to be freed from them?

Ans. No, deceive not thy selfe, thy comfort stands in this, with *S. Paul*, not to allow the evill that thou dost; that sin shall not have dominion over thee, (as the Apostle speaks) thou not being under the Law, but under grace; for saith he in another place, *The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these two are contrary, so that ye cannot doe the things which ye would.* Comfort thy self rather from this self-combate: and thence even gather thy assurance, that now sin and thou art not one lump; that a heavenly light hath discovered this thy darknesse unto thee; onely be sure, sinne hath no quiet possession in thee; complain of thy selfe, and of thy corruptions unto thy Christ, as fast as they come; lay the burden upon the strongest, and then feare not the issue; that which thou allowest not of, complaineest of, and repentest of, shall not, cannot undoe thee, but the Spirit at last shall have a small victory. So much for thy corruptions.

We must not
tie Christ to
our condi-
tions.

And for thy joy and feeling; Tye not thy Saviour to thy conditions, and qualifications; look to thy desires, thy constant walk, not thy straying sins, and thine infirmities: remember that this is Christian perfection, not to live in any grosse sin, nor allow of any smaller sin; and for thy imperfections, look up unto that infinite fulnesse of thy Saviour, and store-house of all grace, whence we receive grace for grace; who is made unto us of God the Father, Wisdome, Righteousnesse, Sanctification, and redemption; And then (whatsoever thy emptinesse be) a part of his riches being fetched and applyed by the hand of faith, will make thee up compleat with the best. And know, that as in the state of innocency under the first *Adam*, his comfort came from within himselfe upon his obedience or disobedience; so now under the second *Adam*, the true and substantiall ground of thy comfort is without thy selfe; in thy justification and application of his all-sufficient merits, and righteousness, to thy trembling soule.

Walke on therefore in the obedience of faith, having a respect unto all Gods Commandements, and then assure thy selfe (the promise is so) thou shalt not be ashamed. Labour as much as thou canst for an higher measure of sanctification and mortification, for this will assure and confirme thy Justification the more it is; but with these Cautions.

1. *Caution.* Be not discouraged at thy small measure whatsoever, (if in truth) so as to flie off from applying the riches of thy Saviour and sweet Husband unto thee; in whom (whatsoever thy poverty be) if married to him, thou art compleat and rich with the best; for the weaker thou art, thou hast so much the more need of a stronger helper to uphold and sustaine thee, it being the law of marriage for the wife to be endowed with all the husbands riches, who is to pay her debts (whatsoever she be) being once married unto him.

2. *Caution.* Again, whatsoever pitch of sanctification or mortification thou obtainest,

taineſt, reſt not in that, but on the Al-ſufficiency of thy bleſſed Lord Jeſus, who is thine, and ſo with him all his obedience, righteouſneſſe, & merits of his life, death and reſurrection; for there is nothing ſo exact in thee, but in the time of tentation the devil will find a hole in it, and ſo make his advantage thereof for thy diſcouragement; whereas it is clear, The Prince of this world being come, (as our Saviour ſayes) found nothing in him.

Note well.

And for the remainder, in thoſe eclipses which damp thy ſpirit in this thy pilgrimage, by deſertion, afflictions, or howſoever, know, that precious faith (that it may ſhine the more) muſt be tryed: make then a vertue of neceſſity, buckle thy ſelfe to this buſineſſe of moſt importance; ſtrive to obey whatſoever thou feeleſt; in ſenſe of thy miſery beleve thy happineſſe in Chriſt; in ſenſe of Gods anger beleve his love, and that he will not be angry for ever. Faith, where it is, is of a victorious nature; therefore, as in contraries thou wouldeſt have an evidence of any goodneſſe in thee; in contraries ſtrive againſt contraries. When thou feeleſt nothing but matter of diſcouragement, know, the commandement is to beleve, and thy duty iſto obey. No ſervice can be performed comfortably without ſome perſwaſion; ſtrive then to get all the arguments thou canſt of a good eſtate, and when thou thy ſelf art not able, get others to read thy evidences for thee; beleve the judgements of others, who can tell thee, that theſe things found in thee, come not from a corrupt and falſe heart.

A motive to practice by contraries.

And withall, pray for the ſpirit of revelation, as S. Paul doth, pray that God would vouchſafe thee his Spirit, to diſcover unto thee that love he beares thee, and the riches thou haſt in Chriſt; to ſhew thee the height, and bredth, and depth, and length, with all the dimensions of his love in Chriſt more and more; that ſo the more we grow in the ſenſe and feeling of his love to us, the more we may be inflamed to love him again; for we cannot love him, unleſſe we find him loving us firſt; ſo beg of him to give us the Spirit of revelation; And attend upon the means, that doth beget faith, which is eſpecially the word, which is called the word of faith; and look to the examples of others, how God hath brought them from a wicked courſe of life, into a ſweet ſtate of graces; Take benefit likewise by the example of thoſe we live with; uſe all meanes to take notice of Chriſts particular love; it is the main thing we ſhould labour after in this world: Can we know how long we have to live in this world, what will make us dye willingly, but when we know that Chriſt will have a care of our ſoules? what made David to commend his ſoule into Gods hands, but this, *Thou haſt redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.* What will make us dye in the faith cheerfully? why Lord thou haſt redeemed my ſoule; when at the houre of death we can commend our ſoule to Chriſt, Take my ſoule bleſſed Saviour, thou haſt redeemed me, thou haſt loved me, and given thy ſelfe for me; Look upon that ſoul in mercy that thou haſt ſprinkled with thine own blood. Strive we then for this particular faith, without which we cannot reſigne up our ſoules comfortably unto Chriſt at the laſt.

Adde prayer unto all, Eph. 1. 17.

Attend the means. Look to examples.

Pſal. 31. 5.

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THE SAINTS ASSURANCE.

Intwo *SERMONS*.

WHEREIN IS SHEWED,

That we may be assured of Gods Love unto us.
Helps for weak Christians how to attaine unto this :
How to know that we have assurance of Gods favour :
That Christ is in all beleivers :
How to know that Christ is in us :
How in a seeming absence he is discovered to be in the Soule :
How to keep Christ there, and how to recover him being lost.



*EPHES. 3. 17, 18, 19. That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith,
that ye being rooted and grounded in love,
May be able to comprehend with all Saints, what is the bredth, and length,
and depth, and height :
And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might
be filled with all the fulnesse of God.*

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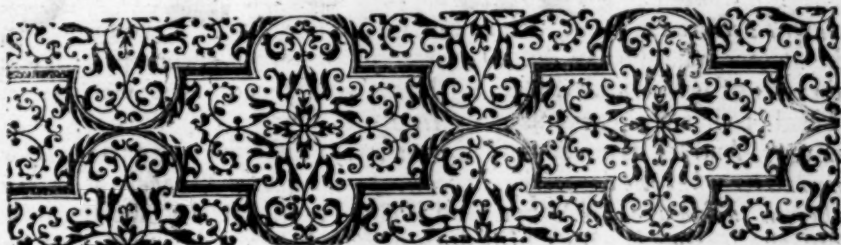
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THE SAINTS ASSURANCE.

SERM. XX.

JOHN 17. 26.

I have declared unto them thy Name, and I will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me, may be in them, and I in them.



In the words observe, that, *we are in a perpetuall proficiencie in this life.* We never know so much, but we may and ought know more: so that by consequence there is a perpetuall necessity of Christs Prophetick Office. We see, *The Church in generall grow to knowledge by degrees,* till Christ the Son of righteousness came gloriously in the flesh, till John pointed at him with the finger, *This is the Lamb of God.* And as the whole body mysticall, so every member: We grow to knowledge by degrees; Christ doth fit his work to our exigents. We need further knowledge, and he is bountifull to promise a further declaration, [*I have declared and I will*] He is never weary of well-doing; as his love is infinite, so his expression is unwearied, that comes from his love.

Dist. 1.

John 1. 29.

A ground of speciall comfort to all Christians, (especially to the labouring weak Christian) that their beginnings are pledges of further degrees. For Christ, where he is *Alpha*, he will be *Omega*: and where he

Dist. 2.

Doct. 3.

Act. 16. 14.

is the *Author*, he will be the *Finisher* of our faith: where he hath laid the *first stone*, he will *set up the roofe at length*. He hath declared, and he will declare. He is not such an unwise builder, as will leave his work; he knows what he can do, and therefore we may enter upon all the meanes of saving knowledge, with this confidence, that we have a Teacher that will carry us along from one degree of knowledge to another. And let us never despaire for any insufficiency of parts; *It is no matter what the capacity, or the incapacity of the Scholler be, when there is such a Teacher*. When God is the Teacher, it is no matter how dull the learner is; for Christ doth not onely bring doctrine, but he brings wit, grace, and ability to the inward man; That is, not only a declaration, (as man doth teach the outward man) but he unlocks, and opens the heart, the eares of the inward man, as he opened *Lydia's* heart. Let none distrust, if they be conscionable, and carefull in the use of good meanes. *I have declared to them thy name*. That is, that whereby thou mightest be known, now in the Covenant of grace, God would be known by the sweet name of Father, by the attributes of Mercy and Love: *That whereby he will be known is his name*. This mercy in the Covenant of Grace in condescending to be our Father in Jesus Christ, together with the sweet attributes of Love and Mercy, (from whence all spring) This is his name. Now he will not be known only to be the God of *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*; the God that brought them out of the Land of *Egypt*, or out of the *North*: but he will be known by the name of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our Father, to be the Father of mercy, and the God of all comfort. Thus we must labour to present God to us now in his right name. This name makes all other names sweet, that he hath. For being once gracious, and mercifull, and a Father in Covenant, his Power is ours, his Wisedome is ours, and all is ours: Then this name of GOD is set forth at large, JEHOVAH, JEHOVAH, *gracious, mercifull, forgiving iniquity, &c.*

What was the end of our blessed Saviour in this his gracious dealing?

That the love wherewith thou lovest me may be in them, and I in them.

Doct. 4.

In unfolding of which words, I propound these generall heads, (to omit other things.)

First, *That God doth love Christ, because he is the first object of his love, his own Image*: for he represents Gods attributes, and whatsoever is good in him, every way exactly; he is the *Jedidiab*, the beloved of the Lord: he is the true *Isaac*, the true matter of joy: he is the first Son, the first beloved.

Doct. 5.

The conveyance of Gods love to us.

The second is, *That after Christ, God loves all that are Christs with that love wherewith he loves Christ*. There is a former love (indeed) of God to give us unto Christ; but I speak of the carriage of our Salvation, all which is in Christ: he loves Christ, and he loves us in Christ, and not otherwise. There is a love that moved him to give Christ, but this love must concur with the other Attributes: it must be such love & mercy, and

and so apprehended, as must be without offering violence or wrong to other Attributes: His *Justice* and his *Holiness* must not be wronged: and therefore though he bare love to those whom he knew before all worlds, yet in the carriage of salvation he intended actually so to set his love upon them, as that it should be in one that should make satisfaction for them, being considered as sinners in themselves; And God would have appeared (in our salvation) the glory as of infinite love to man, so of infinite hatred of sin, and likewise of infinite *Wisdom*, in reconciling these together. His infinite hatred to sinne, how could he shew it more, then that rather than he would not have it punished, his Son must become incarnate to be a Surety for sinne, and to take it away? How could he shew his infinite love more, than by giving such a gift as Christ? And his infinite *Wisdom*, than to devise such a way as to bring these two together? *Justice* and *Love*, to reconcile them? so though God loved a certain company whom he foreknew to everlasting life; yet he intended in the carriage of their salvation, to doe it with the manifestation and glory of his Attributes, that no Attribute might be wronged, nor complaine, and that *Justice* might fully be satisfied: but especially, that his *Mercy* and *Love* might triumph. For what in God stirred up a fatherly heart? what stirred him up to reconcile *Justice* and *Mercy*, but *Love*, that sets on worke all other Attributes? God loves us in Christ therefore, and only in Christ, because in Christ onely his wrath is satisfied, Christ onely is the Mediator, the only Treasury of the Church to convey all to us: the adopted sons have their excellency, and all that they have, in the vertue of the naturall Son.

The third generall thing out of the Text, is this, That the love of God to us, is in Christ, loving us in him, as electing us; and doing all good to us in him, it is the ground of all other favours and graces whatsoever. And therefore he sets it here for all in all, *I have declared, that the love wherewith thou lovest me, may be in them, &c.*

Dist. 6.

Why doth he not say, that I might be mercifull to them, and pittifull? and that they may have other graces that love me?

Quest.

What needs all this? he sets down the spring of all, *I have manifested thy name, thy gracious name*, that in the apprehension of that they may find my love. And so when we feel the love of God, and of Christ, know, that all other graces flow from thence: for indeed all graces wrought in us, issue from Gods love to us first. Whence comes *Pitty*, and *Mercy*, and *Love*, but from Gods shining in our hearts first by his Love, that doth mold & frame the heart to all duties & graces whatsoever? for how can we love him, unlesse we have an apprehension of his love first? you know, iron, and stones, and things that are cold of nature, if they have any heat, we say it is the Sun that hath heated them, or the fire that hath warmed them, because intrinsically they have no heat. So when there is any goodness in the creature, any *pitty*, *mercy*, or love to God, or to those that are his, it implies, that there hath been first the fire, the light of Gods love to us. And therefore (saith Christ) *I have manifested thy name to them, that thy love may be in them.* This love in them

Sol.

1 John 4. 19.
Gal. 4. 9.
The cause of
goodness in
us.

them will be enough to set them on fire in all good things whatsoever. *We love him, because he loves us first: we know him, because he knows us first: and we choose him, because he chooseth us first: we joy and delight in him, because he joyes and delights in us first. All is a reflexe from him. The fourth thing which I chiefly intend to speak of out of the words, is this,*

Dist. 7. *That this love of God to us may be known, and ought to be known of us.*

It may be known with an *Experimentall*, and with an *Applicatory knowledge*. We ought to labour that Gods love may be in us, and that we may know it; not generally that he loves us, but that his love is incorporate, and invested into us, to have a taste, and be sensible of it. For this is the end of Christs prayer, *That the love wherewith thou lovest may be in them.*

Grounds of
necessity why
we ought to
know Gods
love unto us.

I will not speak large in the point, because it is so clear: *For if it be the spring of all duties, of all other graces, which sets all on work; then surely we ought to labour for that which may make us good, and not onely good, but comfortable: Now all our goodnesse, and comfort, it comes from this Originall; the knowledge of Gods love to us; for we have no love to him, untill we know that we are beloved of him. We cannot be thankfull to God, til we know that he loves us in Christ; (I speak of his peculiar love as a Child) Who can be thankfull for that which he knows not? It overthrowes all thankfulness and denies it. We ought to labour for the assurance of the love God in Christ. For it is a duty to joy in the Lord, as our portion; now we must be certaine of his love first; how else can we practice this duty of rejoycing in the Lord alway? what joy and cheerfulness can come, without the love of God shining upon us, and enlarging our hearts to joy? As the shining of the Sun enlargeth the spirit of the poor creatures, the Birds (in the Spring time) to sing; So proportionably the apprehension of the sweet love of God in Christ, enlargeth the spirit of a man, and makes him full of joy and thanksgiving.*

2
Quest.

*Againe, In suffering any crosse, any opposition, who will endure to lose his temporall goods, his life and liberty, to be restrained any way, that knows not Gods love? Who will abide any thing for him that he loves not? What doth set us to suffer all things that may be for God? The apprehension that he loves us. What makes a man willing to end his life, and to yeeld up his soul to God? He knows he shall yeeld his soul to him, as to a Father, that loves him, that will save his soul. Can a man be willing to leave his home here, when he knowes not whether he shall have a better or no? can a man commend his soul to one that he knows not to be his friend? no: can he commend such a jewell to one that he knows not, but to be an enemy? can he say with *Simcon*, Lord let thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation? Doth not all joy & comfort come from the love of God in Christ? what should I enlarge the point? we can neither have grace, nor joy, nor suffer any thing with thankfulness, nor end our dayes with joy and comfort, till we get assurance that we are in the Covenant of grace, and that Gods love is in us.*

Luke 2. 29.

Sol.

And

And therefore it is clear to any body, that knows any thing in religion, or desires any thing; that we ought to labour, that Gods love may be in us. I beseech you therefore make use of it, to see the abominable doctrine of *Papery* (I cannot speak too hardly of it) which teacheth, that we ought to doubt of Gods love; it cuts the sinews of endeavour: Who will endeavour after the attaining of the love of God, and this assurance, when this is laid in the way, that we ought not to do it? Are we not prone enough to distrust, but we must be taught it? is not Satan malicious enough, but we must light a Candle to him, and arm his malice with this doctrine, that we ought to doubt? he is the Master of doubtings; for the works of darknesse, and all the discomfort, and sin that he brings on us, is in darknesse (in this particular darknesse) that we know not whether we be the Children of God or no. And therefore (say some) why should we leave our gaine, our profit, and our present pleasures that we have? and what doth he aim at by the sins he tempts us to, but to shake our assurance of Gods love? Well, they teach the doctrine of Devils in divers things, amongst which this is one that strengthens the kingdom of Sathan much; that people ought to doubt, and that there is no way or means to get assurance of Gods love: This is to overthrow the intent of Christs prayer. Wherefore doth he pray here, and what doth he promise in his prayer? That God would shew them his love, and that he may do it. Why doth Christ declare his Fathers name? and why are all the meanes of salvation, but that we may have Gods love in us? is it not our duty then to answer Christs course, and his promise, and his love? Taking that then for a ground, that we ought to labour to have Gods love to be in us, we will shew, that *we may attain to it, and come to know that God loves us.*

We may attain to it (as I shall shew in the next point) *by the declaration of Gods name: For what is faith* (which is the work of the Gospel and grace of the new covenant) *but the apprehension of the love of God in Christ?* Therefore we that are Christians may attain to it, because we have the Spirit of God, which searcheth the deep things of God. Our spirit knows what is in us, and Gods Spirit knows what is in God, and we have the Spirit of God, to shew us the things of God, and all the benefits and fruits of his love, with the affection it selfe. A Christian in the covenant of grace, knows that God loves him; there is no truth in the world so illustrious, so gloriously, and apparantly true, as this. Would you have a better pledge of his love than JESUS CHRIST, the Son of his love to be given for us, the dearest thing that God hath? He would not have us doubt of his love, that hath given such an invaluable thing, as his own Son to assure us of it, besides all that comes from this: for if he have given him once, he gives all things with him: he that hath given us his Son for our Redeemer and Saviour, he gives us heaven for our inheritance, and his Spirit for our conduct, guide and sanctifier: he hath given Angels for our attendants, he gives us peace and joy, and all things: in Christ we have all. But here, because it is a main point, I will enlarge my self a little, and speak as familiarly as I can to every conscience.

That we may
attain unto
the knowledge
of Gods love
unto us:

1 Cor. 2. 10.

Rom. 8. 32.

How

Ques.

How shall a sinner, that is not yet converted, be perswaded of Gods love to him? And how shall we in the time of temptation deal with sinners in the state of grace? For the first, which is, how those that are unconverted may be drawn to the sense of the love of God, to find that they have any portion in it at all; that they may have it for the time to come, though they feele not yet any goodnesse in them.

Ans. 1.
How an unconverted sinner ought to be dealt with, for bringing him to the love of God.

I answer, *We must draw them to a sense, that they are not yet in the love of God, by those things, that their corruptions suggest to them to measure the love of God by.* As for example, you have a company that think their case is good, because God hath given them *outward blessings*, and accompanies his blessings with patience, and long sufferings; gives them parts and gifts, and preferments in the Church; gives them place, great estimation, and such things. Hereupon, they begin to reason; Certainly God is in love with me; though (if a man should search their lives, and examin them) you shall find, that there is no act, no evidence of Gods speciall favour to them at all. Such therefore must be convinced, that they must not measure Gods love by these things; and that that which is common to castaways cannot be a Character of Gods love, but these things are common to castaways: did not *Abraham* give *Ishmael*, and the rest of his children moveable things; but *Isaac* had the inheritance. *Esau* had his portion in the things of this life; but *Jacob* goes away with the blessing. The blessings of the left hand, castaways, and reprobates may have in abundant measure; God fills their bellies with abundance of outward things, whose hearts he never fills with his love, as in *Dives*: look on such instances: what tend they to, but to shew that these outward things are no evidences of Gods love? and for Gods patience in induring such a state, as I am in, that is no argument: for God, in his patience, indures the vessels of wrath, who treasure up wrath against the day of wrath: God suffering them to prolong their dayes in judgement, that so he may powre the full Vials of his wrath upon them. He suffers them to lead them unto repentance; and they not making a right use of it, God after justifies his vengeance, and judgement the more, when he powres it upon them, so that plenty in outward things accompanied with patience, is no true signe of Gods love.

Gen. 25. 6.

Luke. 16. 25.

Rom. 2. 4. 5.

So in regard of *Parts and Gifts*: had not *Judas* excellent parts? nay the *Devill* himself, who comes neer him in the depth of understanding and policy? *Judas* had a place in the Church, he was an *Apostle*: and *Achitaphel* and *Saul* had excellent gifts of government: all these are no evidences of the love of God to be in us as yet, or that he hath any interest in us. *The way therefore to bring those that have not the love of God, to love God is to shew them their vain confidence*, that they trust to a broken reed, & to that which in time of sickness, the hour of death, & the day of judgment will deceive them, seeing they trust unto a crackt title: Well, if the consciences of such as are not yet in the state of grace be once awaked, we may thus draw them to be within the compass of the love of God. Otherwise, when they see the vanities of other things, & likewise that there is sin in them, (somewhat that layes them open to the

wrath of God) then *Satan* will help their conscience; *Satan*, and their conscience will tell them oft-times all, and make them reason; As for such a wretch as I, there is no hope; I had as good goe on in a sinfull course, and have somewhat in this world, as to want heaven, and the comforts of this life too. And so *Satan* keeps them in darknesse, because they think it is to no purpose to goe about another course, and that it is impossible they should come to assurance: such kind of conceits he hath.

But we must know, that in the covenant of Grace now in the Gospel, this is not put as a barre of Gods love; that I am a sinner, that I have committed any degree of sin whatsoever. None are shut out, but those that will be as they are: and therefore all objections are taken away in the promulgation of the Gospel. I, but I am guilty, and oh, I am laden with sin. Be of good comfort, thou art called, thou art the man: Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden. Oh that I might find mercy sayes one: Why, blessed are the hungry and thirsty; blessed are the poore in spirit; blessed are the mourners: and, Ho, every one that thirsteth come; there is hope for thee; he keeps open house for every one: he shuts out none, but those that shut out themselves, that think these things are too good to be true: and therefore will enjoy their pleasures, and goe on still, and daub with their conscience: but if their hearts be awakened, if they will goe to God, and cast themselves upon his mercy, whosoever is weary, whosoever is athirst, whosoever is heavy laden, God is no acceptor of persons: but at what time soever, any sinner whatsoever repents of any sin whatsoever, God will shew mercy, if he come in, and accept of the Proclamation of pardon. If he come in, and will not continue in his rebellion still, but cast himselfe upon his mercy, and resigne and yeeld himselfe to God, and to Christs government to be ruled by him, as a subject should be, he shall finde mercy. Let the Devill therefore keep none in bondage, in the dungeon of ignorance and unbelieve; for the end of the Gospell is to bring in all such if they will.

Object.

Answ.

Mat. 11. 28.
Mat. 5. 3, 4.

Ezek. 18. 22.

But to come more particularly to such as have true goodnesse in them, and yet the devill takes all advantages to hinder the apprehension of Gods love to them in Christ.

How shall we in divers states and cases bring men to be perswaded of Gods love in Christ, when conscience and Satan together with some outward occurrents, urge them to unbelief, and to stagger?

For instance, a sinner that is converted, and in the state of Grace, he may oft-times fall into some great sin: hereupon Satan taking advantage of the sin, together with conscience (which alwayes helps Satan in this case) speaks bitter things.

Thus we must answer, such as are drawn by Satan to sin, & after accused by Satan for sin, & to whom God is presented as an hateful God; that notwithstanding they should not be discouraged, we have many examples in Scripture: If we sin, we have an Advocate with the Father Christ Jesus, & he is the propitiation for our sins. We ought not therefore to be discouraged from going to God; humbled indeed we ought to be; here

How those that are pestered with clouds of temptations may come to assurance of Gods love.

Quest. 2.
An instance.

Answ.

1

John 1. 2.

is place for humiliation, but there is no place for base discouragement, and calling Gods love into question. A son under anger is a son. And therefore though Satan presents to him an angry God for sin, (for this temptation is then sharpened indeed, when it is made a weapon by Satan by reason that God accompanies the sinner that is fallen into sin with some judgement, as a punishment) yet he ought to lay hold on the rich mercies of God in Christ. What should he else do? that he run away from God? No, a bastard, and a slave will do so; but he runs to God. Even as a child when he hath offended his father, doth not run away from him; but knowing that his Father is mercifull and loving, though he have offended him, and that he is now a son though under his wrath; he goes and studies to appease his father, casts himself upon his favour and mercy, and will indured his correction gently: Thus ought we to do. Satan when he hath gotten us to sinne, he saith, Now you had as good run on still, for God follows you with judgements; you have offended God, and there is no hope for you: so he keeps us without comfort, and God without service by that meanes, whereby we run deeper and deeper into Gods books. Oh come in betimes and repent, it will be easier, thy comfort will be stronger, God will be sooner pacified, thy heart will not be so hardened. Doe not call in question Gods love to thee: for Satan tempts, and corrupts, and drawes thee to sin for that end to call it in question. God may love thee though he followes thee with shews of anger: for he may be angry and yet love thee too, as we shall see afterwards.

Satans sleight
and malice.

2
An objection
of Satan a-
gainst our
sonship and
adoption is
retorted.

Heb. 12. 8.

Again, Sathan doth use, as a weapon, (to shake our sonship or adoption, and our estate in Gods love) manifold temptations and crosses. He comes with (if:) If thou wert in the love of God, and the love of God in thee, and did belong to thee any kind of way, would God follow thee thus and thus with these declarations of wrath and anger?

I answer, a man may retort that upon Satan the Tempter, and upon his own heart: *God corrects every son, and he is a Bastard that hath not correction.* In this world to thrive in a course of sin, when a man hath offended God, it is a sign of reprobation rather than otherwise. Every child God corrects, and for poverty, shame, and the like, we must not measure Gods love by these, for God loves us as he loved CHRIST: mark here Christs prayer, *That the love wherewith thou hast loved me, may be in them.*

Quis.
Sol.
How God may
love us under
a sense of
wrath.

Mat. 27. 46.

How was Gods love in Christ? to fence him from poverty, from disgrace, from persecution, from the sense of Gods wrath? No, but the first begotten Son, the naturall Son, he was persecuted as soon as he was born, he was disgraced, calumniated, slandered, and abused to the death, Nay, and he felt the wrath of God, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* We then may be in the love of God, if we be no otherwise than the naturall Son was, in whom the love of God was when he was at the worst. In the lowest degree of his abasement, God loved him then, as much as at any other time; even when he was accompanied with the sense of his wrath. And therefore reject, and beat back all temptations

temptations with this this invincible argument, *it is no otherwise with me, than it was with his naturall Son.* Shall I desire to be loved any otherwise of God than Christ was loved? His love to Christ did not exempt him from slander, from disgrace, from abasement, from the sense of his wrath (when yet he was the Son of God alwayes) and I, being in this case, shall I doubt of my adoption? shall I dishonour God? shall I adde this sin to the rest of my sins?

Temptation
resisted.

Satan is wonderfull prone to take these weapons (to sharpen them, as I said before) of sin, desertions, temptations and outward afflictions: and so he comes with his *(If)* If thou wert the son of God, would he deal thus and thus with thee? it was alway his course: we must therefore have present by us to repell all such temptations; *That God loves us as he loves his Son, that he chastiseth every son he receiveth:* and that Gods love is not alwayes and only manifested in exempting of us from these things. Let us measure Gods love that he bares to us in Christ, by the best fruits of his love: What are those? An heart to seek him; to feare his Name, love to his Majesty, love to his children, delight in good things, hatred of that which is evil: none but his can esteem and value his love by these things: By these therefore and the like peculiar marks, and stamps of the Spilit that are in us, let us judge of his love, and not by any outward thing whatsoever, for all outward crosses whatsoever, befell his own Son: and can we desire that he should love us otherwise than he loved him? we are predestinate to be conformable unto him: and why should we refuse to be conformable unto him in abasement, with whom we hope to be conformable in glory? Let faith therefore plead against all the suggestions of Satan, and accusations of conscience. By faith in the Word of God perswade we our selves that we are in the love of God, if we finde any evidences of his love in our spirits: we shall come to them by and by: but first, I will name one or two directions, how we may come to have Gods love in us, and how to know that his love is in us.

Now.
Quest.
Sol.

We may come to have his love in us, *If we be careful to preserve our selves under the means of salvation, and if so be we doe present God to our souls, as he is presented in his glorious Gospel.* When we are convinced of sin first, (I speak of such as are convinced throughly of a sinfull state) such may come to the knowledge of Gods love in Christ by the Gospel, and by presenting God to their souls, as he is presented in the Gospel, to be the Father of mercy, and the Father of Christ. The Devill he puts other colours upon God; he presents him as a Tyrant, as a Judge, as a Revenger, as one that hates us.

How to come
to have Gods
love in us.

Againe, labour to be such as God may love us: God loves his owne Image: Wherefore doth he love Christ, but because he perfectly represents him? If we would come to have Gods love in us, beg of him, that by his spirit, he would stamp his likenes in us, that as he is light, we may be light; as he is love, so we may have love; as he is pittifull, so we may have our hearts enlarged: as he is free in love, so we may be free in love; and that we may be holy, as he is holy; that as he hates sin, so we

may hate it; that we may joy in him, affect what he doth affect, hate that which he hates; that so he may look upon us, as his own image, and delight in us, as the representation of his own likeness.

3. Again, *We may come to have Gods love by more and more sequestering our selves, and our affections from conformity with his enemies*, for this helps the other. If we would be like to God, and so come to have him delight, and solace himselfe in us, we must withall labour to be unlike the world, and wicked persons, that are yet in the state of corruption, and danger of damnation. Let us labour not to conform our selves to them, but to frame our selves cleane of another fashion: for you know if we fashion our selves to the world, the world is not of God, but it is Gods enemy. How shall God delight in us, when we delight in courses that are sinfull, wretched, and worldly? The world must perish, be condemned, (as Paul saith) *God afflicts us that we should not be condemned with the world*; the world lies in mischief, our especiall care therefore must be, that we have no correspondency with it.

4. But especially (to come to that which I intend to make a distinct point) *by the Spirit, and Christs manifesting of God himselfe in the Gospel: I have declared unto them thy Name, and will declare it, that the love wherewith thou hast loved may be in them.*

Exhortation) Beg of Christ therefore the spirit of revelation, as it is Ephes. 1. 17. that ye may know what is the exceeding love of God in Christ: and see the height, and breadth, and depth of Gods love in him. You know what that holy man said in the Gospel, *Shew us the Father, and it is sufficient*: so desire we no more, but to see the Father once. We must go to Christ, that he would shew us the Father; and we must go to God the Father to discover his Son: For, either of both discover the other; God drawes us to Christ, *There is none come to me* (saith Christ) *but the Father draws them*. And Christ opens, and discovers the Father to us, and the holy Ghost discovers them both, for as he proceeds from both, so he shewes us the love of both; he shews us the love of the Father, and of the Son.

Labour therefore for the manifestation of Christ, that Christ would manifest his Fathers love to us, and that God would manifest Christ by his Spirit: that the Father would give us his Spirit, and the Son would give us his Spirit, which is his love. For Gods love is alwayes with Gods Spirit: his Spirit comes from him, and his love is alwayes with his Spirit the same Spirit that sanctifieth us, that witnesseth, is the Spirit of love: Now Christ doth manifest this.

Luke 24. 45. He manifests Gods Name to us (as I said) which is his Truth: he opens the understanding by his Spirit, and then he speaks to every mans particular soul, *I am thy salvation*. All knowledge of Gods love is from the knowledge of the Gospell, together with his Spirit: for how can I know that Gods loves me, but by his own Word and Spirit? by his own Son? I say the Spirit, and the Word (which are divine) they perswade me of Gods love. *That must be above nature, above Satan, and above all opposition whatsoever, that convinceth my heart of Gods love in Christ.*

The arguments must be divine, taken out of Gods truth; and those truths must be set on by the Spirit of God (which is above my spirit) and by Christ God and man who sends his Spirit: This will silence all objections whatsoever, that the heart can make (as indeed our hearts are full of cavils) against the love of God: The Word and Spirit going together will doe it. And therefore beg the Spirit of revelation: and because the Spirit and Word goe together, attend alwayes upon the Word, and think the Promises are Gods Promises, and desire that Christ would set the Promises upon our hearts, that we may know the things that belong to us in particular.

Well, if this be so, that the declaring of Gods favour, and mercy is the way that his love may be in us, as it is, then what shall we think of those that are enemies to the declaration of the Name of God, to the preaching of the Gospel, to the reading of the Scripture? they are enemies of our comfort, and of Gods glory: for how shall I know that God loves me, but by declaring his Name by the Word, and by the Spirit? *Christ by the Spirit, and by the Word declares his Fathers Name, and so I come to know the Fathers love to me.* How pitifull is the estate of those soules, that live where there is no means, no Word of God, no declaring of Gods Name? Can the love of God be in them? No, this manifesting of Gods love, it is with the manifestation of the truths of the Gospell. *I have manifested thy Name in the teaching of the Word, that thy love may be in them.* Let us therefore be perswaded to attend upon the meanes of salvation, and upon the Spirit of God, together with the meanes: God will work together with the means of salvation, and perswade our hearts of his love to us in Christ (if we attend meekly upon them) at one time or other.

O, but I have attended long upon the means, and have prayed, and yet I cannot find the love of God to me. Object.

Wait a while: all are not called at one hour. *Jesus* was called when he was young, and so *Timothy*, and *Joseph* when they were young? *Paul* when he was old. Those that were converted at *Peters* Sermon, were men of yeares: wait daily; the good houre will come. *God perhaps will have thee under the Law a little longer, before thou come under grace.* He will convince thee of thy cursed estate thou art in by nature, make thee see thy self more vile: and when he hath wrought and perfected the work of humiliation, then in time call thee to himself. Leave not the Porch of Wisedomes house, for in time God will speak to thee, and say to thy soul, that he is thy salvation. To come to an evidence or two of this estate.

We may know that we have the love of God in us (among other things) *If we come by this love by the manifestation of Gods Name:* if we can say, it came by the declaration, and manifestation of Gods truth with his Spirit to our hearts. How t^e know that we have the love of God in us.

Seasonable afflictions (which the Devil moves us to think evidences of Gods hatred) they are evidences of his love, if they be sanctified, to make us jealous of our ways, & to see the depth of our corruptions the more,

that we can never see sufficiently in this life. They are arguments of Gods love. *But especially this; If our love to God come from the Word and Spirit, and from good things, that are manifested from thence.* When thou dost find Gods love in thee in regard of some beginnings of faith, hope, love, hatred of evill; and that there is peace, and joy, and such like things in thee which are peculiar: Then comfort thy self in thy portion whosoever thou art, whatsoever estate thou art in for outward things.

2 Cor. 11. 16.

Saint *Paul* we see for outward matters what a kind of man he was: he reckons up his own afflictions and abasements; but how full of thankfulness was he, because he knew that God loved him in Christ, that Gods love was in him? Our Saviour Christ, what did he care for all outward things? he knew his Father loved him. Let us therefore labour to have our part, and portion in this peculiar love of God, and to be assured that Gods love is in us; and for other outward matters, let us leave them to Gods wisdom, who knows what is good for us, and beg of God thus:

Lord, I doe not aske of thee riches, I aske not glory, I aske not preferment in the world, I aske none of these; I aske thy love, in which all is that is good. For the love of God it is a rich love, as that love that he beares to his Sonne: If he love me once, he loves me; as he loves his Sonne. Now he loves him *freely, and richly, and unchangeably, and with an incomparable love.* Gods love both to him, and us, it is an incomparable love: For what is the love of a Father, but a drop from his love? And what is the love of a mother? Can a mother forget her child? Yet if she could, I would not forget thee, (saith God) *Esay 49. 15.* So *David*, when my father and mother forsook me, God took me up. Behold the incomparable love of God to us! and therefore if we have that, we have in that all that is good.

Excellency of
Gods love.
Vie of it.

Psal. 27. 10.

The love of God though with afflictions, with crosses, with whatsoever in the world is contrary, yet it is the most desirable estate: for one glimpse of Gods fatherly countenance in Christ, it will make us in such a case, as we shall not care for any affliction whatsoever. *Paul* in the dungeon, God gave him a taste of his love, and what did he care for whipping, for the darkness, for the nastiness, and noysomness of the prison? he was (as it were) in Paradise: Gods love was in him. If Gods love be in us, if we be with *Daniel* in the Lions den, the den shall be a kind of Paradise: I say, where God is, there is Paradise; yea indeed where Gods love is, there is heaven it selfe: so we have Gods love, it is no matter what we want, nay it is no matter in what state of misery we are, in this world.

Act. 16. 25.

If God have kindled love in us, there is no such sweet estate; if it come from God, it will make us digest any thing: love it will put such life in us, that we shall want or suffer any thing quietly. When we feel the love of God in us, that he loves us to immortality, that he loves us to life everlasting, to an inheritance immortall and undefiled; that he loves us in things that accompany salvation, peculiar blessings: This will swallow up all discouragements whatsoever, it will make us be in heaven before our time. The sense of the love of God, (when it is shed into our hearts)

as it is *Rom. 5.* what will it do? it will make all tribulations, afflictions, crosses, and wants sweet unto us. *The love of God* (saith he) *is shed into our hearts by the Spirit.* When the Spirit of Christ Jesus is shed into our hearts, and witnesseth to us the love of God, and of Christ, it makes us rejoyce under hope, triumph in all tribulation, in all estates whatsoever.

But when doth Christ manifest his Fathers love most to us by the Spirit?

I answer, *Not at all times alike*: for it is with a Christians soul, as it is with the dayes of the yeare, or seasons of the day. There is foul, and faire: there is darknesse, and light: there is an intercourse, not alwayes an eaven apprehension to us of Gods love in Christ at all times. God sees reasons why it should not be so. Among many there are these:

1. *To sharpen our desires of heaven*, which is a constant, immutable, unchangeable estate.

2. *And likewise to make us watchfull*, that when we have tasted of Gods love, we doe not lose it.

3. *To make us observe how we lost it at first*, that so we may recover it againe.

4. *To be a correction to us likewise for our boldnesse to sin, and keeping carnall company.* Many ends God hath to withhold the taste and sense of his love to us, that we may feare him at one time, as well as at another.

But, *When is it most of all?*

Gods love is in us most, when we stand most in need of it, in extremities; when no creature can helpe us: when we stand most in need of the manifestation of Gods love we have it. When do parents shew their love most of all? is it not in the extremities of their children? then they moan them, and pittie them, whom before in the time of health they corrected sharply: But now they see the child is sick and distempered, now they shew all love to it. So when all comforts are taken away, then Gods comforts come in place, and then especially: for then they are known to be Gods, who doth all things as shall be most for his glory. Then it is most for his glory, to help when none else can; and then it is most for the comfort of a poore distressed Christian: for then God comes (as it were) immediately, and doth help even to the ravishing of a Prince or a King (not sending any messenger) should come to a man soul. If immediatly in his own person, & should say to him, *Fear not you shall want nothing, you shall have the best encouragement I can give you: O what a comfort would it be to any man! yet what are all these to the sweet report of Gods love in Jesus Christ? when nothing else can help us, then Gods Spirit comes immediately to us, & tels us, Be of good comfort, Heaven is yours, God is yours, Christ is yours: All is yours to work for your good.* And he doth not only feed them with promises, but enlargeth the soul with present comfort.

Who would therefore be discouraged from induring any thing for Gods Name (being cast into extremity) when that is the time espacially to feel Gods love more than at other times? the sense, & feeling whereof in Christ is the best estate in the world: There is no estate comparable to the sense of Gods love. What makes heaven, heaven, (as it were) but the

Quest.

Ans.

Not at all times alike. Why Gods love is not at all times alike manifested.

1

2

3

4

Quest.

Ans.

When God doth most manifest his love to us by the Spirit.

Not.

the sense of his love? of his sweet fatherly face in Christ, shining upon us in his Son, and perswading of us, that we are his sons? Why this divine comfort that comes from the favour of God, it is that that makes all nothing, commands all the creatures, rebukes all, Satan and all. The beams of such a rich and gracious God are above all discouragements, for they are humane or Diablicall; they go no higher; and if they be discouragements from the sense of the wrath of God, from divine desertion, when God shewes himselfe an enemy; yet when he discovers himself a friend and a Father in Christ, they all vanish, even as a cloud, as a myst before the Sun. What are all earthly discouragements to the sense of Gods love in Christ? Thus we see how Gods love is manifested to us by manifesting of Gods Name by Christ; and when especially, and to what end? *That his love may be in us.*

Vse 1.

Do but raise these thoughts in your meditations, what a comprehensivething this is that Christ ayms at in his prayer, and in his endeavour. Should we not ayme at that which Christ ayms at? must not this needs be an excellent state, to have the love of God in us? It is no matter who hates us, if God loves us: if God and his favour be present with us, it is no matter what troubles be present. Though we be in the valley of the shadow of death, if God be with us, and the assurance of his love to our hearts, it is an heaven upon earth. Rejoyce in your portion, whosoever you be, that find the love of God to you in regard of the best things.

We see it is the ayme of Christs prayer, and of his endeavour; it is the ayme of the declaration of the Gospell, that Gods love may be in you; that when God (in regard of his Spirit, and grace and comfort) is in you, you may have a rich portion. Would you have more than God himself, and his love? what if you want a beame? you have the Sun it selfe, Gods love; you want perhaps riches, or friends; I but you have Gods love, which is a wise love: if he see it were for your good, you should not want them. If you want a streame, you have the Spring it selfe. Rejoyce therefore in this your portion; let it be an argument to comfort you, and a motive of endeavour to us all, to labour to find this love of God in us; and root, and to purge out of your soules all other things that cannot stand with the same. Desire God by his Spirit to subdue in us, and to work out of us mightily by the strong operation of his blessed Spirit, whatsoever cannot stand with his love in Christ: That he would raigne, and rule in us by his blessed Spirit: that he would make us such, that he might (as it were) keep his Court in us: That he would make our hearts (as it were) an Heaven for himselfe to dwell in: that he would cast down all high and proud thoughts whatsoever; that his love may be in us.

Vse 2.

And when we want any grace, humility, sincerity, or love to men or God, we must take the method here laid downe; I know all this comes from the want of the feeling of Gods love to me: for if Gods love were rooted in my heart, if it were as hard as steel, that would make it flexible, plyable, pittifull, and tender to others, and I should love God again: my heart is cold, and dead; what is the reason of it? I feel not Gods love

love, and therefore it should edge our prayers thus; Lord let me feel thy love in Christ: I cannot love holy duties without the manifestation of thy love; and therefore manifest thy love to my soul: I give you a new Commandement (saith Christ) that ye love one another. John 13. 34.

Why, whence comes this Commandement of love to the brethren in the Gospel to be a new Commandement?

Quest.

Because the declaring of the Name of God, of his mercy, and of his love in Christ, gives us new hearts: and where there is more manifestation of Gods mercy, there is more love to others, and therefore, because there is a new enlargement of Gods love in Christ, therefore it is a new Commandement: the heart is set on fire now with the love of God, which is manifested in Christ, which was not declared before.

Sol.

The new
Commandement.

And therefore, if we would have new hearts for this new Commandement, let us labour to have more of the mercy of God in Christ; more declaration by his Word & Spirit: that so by his sanctified means (having his love in us) we may have new hearts, new love, and new affections to one another. This is the way, in the want of grace, to come to get the love of God in Christ: desire him that he would by his Spirit reveale himselfe, and reveale Christ to us: and that we may see the dimensions of his love, (which passeth knowledg) and then all our grace, and comfort will follow.

When we are in darknesse, we are glad to come into the light of the Sun: so when we have any distemper in our soules, let us come to this light of Gods love in Christ, and by oft meditation thereon, see how he presents himselfe to us a Father in Covenant; not onely a Friend, but a Father, a gracious Father: beg with all means, with reading, with hearing, with conference, with Gods Spirit, to reveal his fatherly affection in Christ, and for other things they will be easie.

I speak this the rather, because men goe plodding upon duties, and take not a right method. When we find any distemper, and deadnesse of spirit, search what is the cause of it: if it be negligence, irreverence, or any such thing, let us repent, and doe the first works. But let us alway take this in; Lord shew thy self, shew thy love; thy pardoning love first, and then thy curing love: thy forgiving love, and then thy giving love: I am in a sinfull state; forgive that which is amisse, and give me that which I want: shew thy large love every way, both in giving, and forgiving: heale me, and cure me: let me feele this thy love in the sweetest peculiar fruits of it; and then reformation will follow upon all: then our care will be continuall (when we have the love of God) so to walk, as that we may abide in that love, and that love in us, that we doe not displease him, nor give occasion of distaste.

Therefore there must be a great deal of reverence, and love: much humility and watchfulnesse, if we would preserve our selves in the love of God. For when one hath once tasted of his love, it is his desire alway to taste it: to taste how gracious the Lord is. If we therefore would so do, let us watch narrowly, as he that would keep his acquaintance & love with a great person. For we must know the distance between the great God and

Ps. l. 34. 84

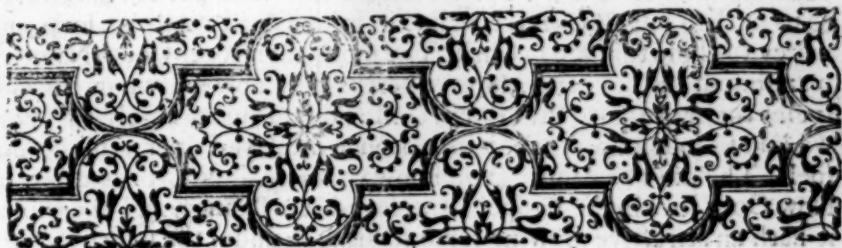
Philip. 2. 11.
Ephes. 4. 30.

Trial of Gods
love.

and us ; there must be humility ; *Humble thyself, and walk with thy God: and make an end of your salvation with fear and trembling.* With a fear of jealousy, especially that we grieve not the Spirit, that seals us to the day of redemption. And therefore if we have the Spirit witnessing this love, which is the cause of all comfort, and all grace ; grieve not the Spirit, quench not the Spirit, when the motions of it come, resist not the gracious Spirit with carnall delights, let the Spirit have a full work, lye open to it. *Gods love reignes in us then, when we will doe nothing contrary to it.*

Now the sweetest fruit of it in us is his Spirit ; let us not quench, nor resist the Spirit ; but cherish it by all duties, and by all holy means. One day led thus by a Christian (though with some conflict with corruption) in the taste and sense of Gods love to him in Christ, is worth all contentment that this world can afford. And that *David* knew well enough, *Psal. 4. 6.* when he desires neither come, nor wine, nor oyle : let them (saith he) desire what they will ; but Lord shew me the light of thy countenance, and in it I shall have all that I desire to have : and without that I care neither for come, nor wine, nor oyle, nor any thing.

So let it be our prayer, that God would shew his love and mercy: that he would shew his love to us in Christ, which is better than life it selfe. And then for other things be at a point: be indifferent. We see the Apostles prayers in their Epistles, all of them being led by the same Spirit: They pray for *Grace*, and *Mercy*, and *Peace*. Why doe they not pray for all other things ? To shew, if they had *Grace*, and *Mercy*, and the *Love of God*, they have all. If we have not that, it is no matter what we have. But some other things there are to be unfolded, which must be reserved till another time.



THE SAINTS ASSURANCE.

SERM. XXI.

JOHN 17. 26.

That the love wherewith thou hast loved me, may be in them, and I in them.



EE propounded formerly out of the words these points to be handled :

First, That the love wherewith God loves his own Son, is the love wherewith he loves those that be in him.

Secondly, That God loves his owne Son best and first.

Thirdly, That the love of God is the cause of all good to us.

Fourthly, That this love of God may be known.

*Fiftly, That one way and ground to know that God loves us with that love he loves his own Son, is the manifestation of Gods Name: the manifestation of Gods truth in the Gospell : By that we come to know that God loves us: for this the coherence of the Text, *I have manifested thy Name to them, that thy love may be in them.* So then the scope (as we see hence) of the Gospell, and the manifesting of it, is to lay open the riches of*

of Gods love to us, that we may know that God loves us in his beloved Son. Indeed so it is : For we have a throne of Grace discovered to us in the Gospel; God reconciled in Jesus Christ : All is love and mercy to those that are in Christ. The more therefore Gods Name is manifested, his Love and Mercy, whereby he is now known in the Gospel ; the more (I say) it is discovered and laid open; surely the more we know Gods love, which is as a Banner displayed over us in the Gospel. The use of a Banner (you know) was to draw swords under it. Now Gods love in the Gospel is displayed as a Banner; and thereupon it hath an attractive drawing force to bring us under the sweet government of God in the Gospel, because there we are under his love.

The point that I am now to take in hand is this : *That Christ doth manifest his Fathers Name, his Mercy, Goodnesse, and Truth : that Gods love may be in them, and himselfe in them.*

We see then that Gods love, and Christ doe goe together ; whereforever his love is in the best things, there it is in Christ, and with Christ. *This is eternall life to know thee, and whom thou hast sent, Jesus Christ.* All comes from Gods love to us in Christ : Where Christ is not, there is not the love of God : and where the love of God is, there is Christ. The sweet combination of the Trinity, is not only a patterne of love and agreement to us, that we should love one another; but a main ground of comfort likewise ; for they joyne in love for our good. The Father loves us, as he loves his Son, and with his Son : where Christ is, there is his Fathers love ; and where his Fathers love is, there is Christ. *I am in the Father, and the Father in me.* All that the Father hath, is mine, and all that I have, is the Fathers.

An interview.

I say, it is not onely a patterne of agreement, that we should labour to agree as the Trinity, (which is an exact forme of unity :) but it is a ground of speciall comfort, they agree in our good, and eternall salvation. The Father looks upon us as we are in his Son : as he hath given us to him to bring us to salvation by his merit and passion. Christ looks on us as we are in the Fathers love ; *Thou gavest them me :* and we look on our selves, first in Christ, and then in Gods love : So that there is this mutuall interview : God loves us as we are in his Son; he is in the Father, and we in him. We see our selves in Christ, know our selves, and love our selves in him, as having our being and living from him : and we are known by him, and his love is known by us, because they go both together. *That thy love may be in them, and I in them.*

And I in them.

How Christ is
in us, & we in
him.

We are in Christ, as the Branch in the Vine, as the members in the head, knit to it in the body : & he is in us as the Vine is in every particular branch : as the head is in the members by his influence, imparting unto them life, regiment, & motion. *In them :* that is (for the explication of the term;) that I may dwell in them as in a Temple, in a House : that I may infuse strength into them, as the Vine into the Branches : that I may

may impart spirituall life into them, as the Head into the Members. *This is the end of my manifesting thy Name, that I may be in them, that so thy love may be in them.* I might hence observe, (I will but touch it) That whosoever knowes not Christ, nor hath a being in him, hath nothing to doe with the Father.

I in them.

The end of Christs manifesting his Fathers Name, is, that he may be in them, and that his Fathers love may be in them.

To unfold the connexion a little, How doth this hang together; *I have manifested thy Name to them, that I may be in them;*

Quest.

As thus:

Gods Mercy and Truth in the Covenant of Grace, are all in Christ, and for Christ: this being discovered and manifested to the soule, the soul sees the love of God in the Gospell; there it is opened, and discovered: there is offered Gods love and mercy in forgiving sinnes, and in giving all priviledges in Christ; not only discovered, but offered to all beleevers that will receive Christ. Thus all the good in him, being discovered and offered to the soule, hereupon it comes to lay hold upon Christ, and to embrace him, as offered of the Father, and presented unto it by the Spirit of God, given together with the Gospel, and the manifestation of it: the Spirit works faith in the heart, which closeth with Christ thus offered; and so Christ dwels in the heart by faith. Faith ascends to heaven, and layes hold on Christ: faith goes back to Christ crucified, and brings him to dwell in the heart.

Sol.

How Christ manifests his Fathers name to us that he may be in us.

Now for some observeable points: First, we see, that

Christ is in all Beleevers.

Doct. 2:

Here is a notable bond of Union between them; *Christ by his Spirit is in them all, therefore they should all labour to be one.* Christ is one in them all, not divided; his Spirit is the same Spirit in them all. It were an excellent thing, if all the men in the world had the same thoughts, the same Religion, the same ayne; the same affection to good things; all as one man. How strongly would they then be carryed against any opposition whatsoever? and how comfortable would they be in themselves, if all had one heart, one affection, one ayme? This should be, and this is the end of Christs prayer; it is the end of all, to bring us all to be one in our selves, to be one in him, and in the Father. Now here is one argument to inforce it, that all may agree in good things, in our ayne, love, and affections. There is one Christ, there is one Head of all the Members, *I in them.* We must take heed that we do not think this phrase to be a shallow phrase, as it is in common life: We say of two friends, there is one soul in two bodies, because the soul lives in the party loved; and to make it nothing but a matter of affection; Oh no, *I have manifested thy truth, that I may be in them;* it argues more

I i

than

than union in affection; as in marriage, there is more than the Union of love, there is the Bond that interesteth the Wife in all the goods of her Husband. Christ is in us more than in love, for he is in us indeed.

Quest.
Sol.
How Christ
is in us.

I, but is he in us Body and Soule, and Godhead, and all, as the Papists will have him in the Sacrament? No, but he is in us in regard of his humane Nature, because his Spirit is in us: and the same Spirit that sanctified that Nature, the same Spirit sanctifieth us. So there is an Union between us and his humane Nature, (though it be in heaven) as, *The Sun is in the house, when the beames of the Sun are there.* So when we find the efficacy of Christ, that Christ dwells in us by his Spirit, though his humane nature be not there, yet notwithstanding the power of the grace of Christ is there; because the same Spirit that sanctified his humane nature, sanctifies and comforts us: it is a wonderfull working and operative being, when Christ is said to be in us. Even as the Vine doth transfuse juice, and life to the Branch, (whereupon it comes to be fruitfull) so we must conceive deeply of this phrase, *I in them.*

Quest.
Sol.
How to know
that Christ is
in us.

How shall we know that Christ is in us?

Quest.
Sol.
How to know
that Christ is
in us.

If he be in us by his Spirit, he will work great matters in us, there will presently be tumults in the soule: For Christ when he is in us, he comes not to friends, but he finds all in rebellion, and in opposition: when he is in us therefore, presently there are stirrs in the soule. Even as soon as ever he was born into the world, you know *Herod* was mightily troubled, and all *Jerusalem* with him: *Herod* had little cause, but much troubled he was; he thought one was born that would have dispossessed him; and therefore he was jealous, and labours to kill him, if he could. So it is when Christ is borne in the soule, there are tumults: those lusts that bare sway before, those desires, down they goe: they plead prescription, and are loath to yeeld: Naturall desires, that have been from before, are loath to yeeld to Christ, a new comer. He is as a new Conquerour that comes with new lawes, fundamentally new; he overturns all the lawes of Iud; and of the flesh, he comes in more strongly, and thereupon in conversion; wheresoever Christ is borne, there is first a strife; the soule doth not presently yeeld to him. (This is spoken of those, that have not been converted from the beginning.) There are some now in the bosome of the Church, that have no violent conversion from a wicked estate to a good, *But from a lesse degree to a greater, they grow more and more.* They have the Spirit of Christ from the beginning; they are not much troubled with such inward oppositions.

Obs.

2
Mat. 21. 12.

Where Christ is, he will drive out all that is contrary: As when he entered into the Temple, he drove out the money-changers, and whipt out those corrupt persons there: So as soone as ever he comes into the soule by his Spirit, out goe those lusts, those desires that were there before, *Worldlinesse, Profanenesse, Fury, and Rage,* wherewith the Soule was transported before; that possessed the habitation, that God should dwell in: when Christ comes in, he scourgeth out all: where these therefore are in any force, there certainly Christ is not.

Again,

Again, *Where Christ is, he doth rule*, for he takes the keyes of the house himselfe, and governs all in some measure: he gets into the heart, and sets up a throne there. For I make account, if he go no deeper than the brain, and tongue, that is to give him no better entertainment than he had when he was born, to be put in a Manger. No, where he is, (I mean where he is in the heart and affections) there he rules; and where he takes not his lodging in the affections, and in the heart, in the joy, desire, and delight; he is not at all to any purpose. To have him in the Braine to talke, and in the Tongue to discourse, and to keep the heart for worldly lusts, and such things, I account not this an in-being of Christ to any purpose, to any comfort. Where Christ is comfortably, he takes his Throne and lodging in the heart, he dwels in it by faith. *By heart, I mean (especially) the Will and Affections*; he draws the Will to cleave to him, to choose him for the best good. And therefore where Christ dwels, there is an admiring of the excellencies, and of the good things that are in him, and contentment in him above all things in the world. For he dwels in the heart and affections, (especially in the Will:) The Will chooseth him to be an Head and Husband; it cleaves to him as the chiefe good: the Affection of joy, it joyes in him above all things: the Affection of love, and desire, of zeale in his cause, is strong against those, that oppose him and his Truth. Thus he takes up his Seat, and his Throne in the heart wheresoever he is in truth.

And therefore, *This followes upon that too: Where Christ is in the heart by faith, and takes up the Affections, there is a base esteem of all the excellencies in this world whatsoever.* Moses did but see a far off the excellency that came by Christ, and he accounted all the pleasures of sin for a season to be nothing; and took upon him the rebuke of Christ rather. S. Paul accounted all but dung and drosse; all his former works, all his Pharisaicall excellency, and all things else he accounted as nothing, and of no value, having in his heart and soule an admiration of the All-sufficiency, and excellency in Christ. *Zachew*, as soon as ever Christ came once into his house, (but he was in his heart before he was in his house, or else he had never done it) he grew liberall; *Halfe my goods* (saith he) *I give unto the poore.* He loved Extortion and base courses before; but now down they go, he will be no base dealer, no oppressour any more; he presently satisfies those whom he had wronged.

And so the *Disciples* (howsoever they were busied before) when Christ once took up his lodging in their hearts, and opened their spirits by his Spirit, to see that he came into the world to save sinners, & opened their eyes to see the excellency that was in him; away goes all the trash that they were exercised in before, that they might follow Christ: *Matthew* followes him presently, and so the rest. *It is impossible that the heart which entertains our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ into it, should have in overmuch admiration any earthly excellency whatsoever.* For it is the nature of the soule, upon the discovery of better things, to let the estimation of other things of lesse vallue, to fall down presently. As we see in civill things; children, when they come to be men, they are ashamed

of childish toys: So it is with a man that is converted, when Christ enters, he so opens the understanding, and enlargeth the heart to see and admire better things, that presently it begins to care nothing for this world in comparison. Thus we see how we may know whether Christ hath taken his Seat, and lodging in us or no.

5 To go on a little further. *If Christ be in us, he doth frame us to himselfe*; he doth transform us to his own likeness; for he is such a Head, as changeth his members; such an Husband, as changeth his Spouse. *Moses* could not change the complexion of his *Æthiopian* wife; she was black, and he left her black: but Christ renewes and changeth his Spouse. He is such a Head as quickens his members; such a Vine, as puts life in the Branches. And therefore you may know by this altering, changing, transforming power, whether he be in you or not. He alters and changeth us to his own likeness; that as he is set down in the Gospel in his life, conversation, and disposition; so (if we have entertained him, and he be in us) we should have the same disposition, the same mind, and the same will with him; for he will alter us to himself, that he may take the more delight in us; we shall judge of things, as he judgeth of them: there will be a delight to do our Fathers will, as it was his meat and drink to doe his Fathers will. We shall have a spirit of obedience, as he had, to look to our Fathers glory, and to his Commandment in all things. We shall have compassionate and melting hearts to the misery of others, as he had bowels yearning to see sheep without a Shepherd. We shall have humble and meek hearts, as he had; *Come learn of me, for I am humble and meeke*: For where he dwells (I say) and takes up his Throne, he alters, and changes the disposition in all things to be like his own. For when he comes to the soul, he takes up all the parts thereof, and keeps out all that may hinder his work. He takes up the *Eyes*, the *Eares*, the *Understanding*, and the *Affections*: and even as we shut up the doores and windowes against all that is contrary to us; so the Spirit of Christ, where he is, shuts the door of the senses both to Satan and all his suggestions, and whatsoever else might hurt us.

6 Where he enters likewise, he possesseth the whole Inward, and Outward man in himselfe: he changeth it like to himselfe; he rules the eyes, the ears, the hands: he renewes all, that our delights are clean other than they were before. If there be such a power in his truth, that like a Siene ingrafted) it doth change us into it self; certainly where Christ dwells, he hath as much power as his Word. His Word is like Leaven, which alters the whole lump: For the Word ingrafted, makes the soul, that beleeves it, heavenly like it selfe. How is this? Because Christ comes with his Word, leavens, alters, changeth, and turns the Soule. Christ by his Spirit and Word is said to doe it; because the Spirit of Christ comes with the Word, which doth all. Those therefore, whose dispositions are contrary to Christ, Christ is not begotten in them: For certainly he doth alter, and change, and fit his Temple for himself, and drives out, and chafeth thence (as I said before) all that is contrary; and

and keeps the door of the senses, and possession against all; he useth every member as an instrument of the Spirit, and weapon of defence.

Again, *You may know who dwels within, by what servants come out of the house, and who comes in.* Would you know who dwels in the soul? see what comes from within the house: filthy thoughts, blasphemous words, Oaths, rotten discourse; Eyes full of Adultery; Ears open to receive that which may taint the soul. Who dwels here? Christ? no, where nothing but filth comes out, the devill dwels there. These two are immediate opposites, there is no third; either Christ or the Devill dwels in us. Now when nothing comes out of a man, but scorning of goodnesse, and that which is rotten & offensive, (if there be other things, they come from the Braine, and not from the heart, they have no Seat there) the devill is there: Christ and his Messengers are not there. There come no good thoughts, no good desires, no good speeches, and is Christ there? is Christ in the heart, that drinks in corruption at all the senses? that lets open all the senses to all that is naught? to hear all kinds of things that may cherish corruption? that will be at every base exercise? that will see all that may blow up the flesh? what is this within that is thus cherished? Is Christ fed with filthy discourse? with filthy spectacles? doth Christ (in us) delight in these things? O no: who dwels there then that is thus fed? Sure the spirit that is there fed is the devill: The devill dwels in our spirits, and in our corruptions, which are like the devill, in that proportion that he dwels in us, and stirres us up to feed him with these things, to the destruction of the soul. No no, from the heart where Christ is, proceed often prayer, sighes, and groans to God, and fruitfull discourses to others: and all the senses, and passages of the body are open for good things: he hath desires to see that which is good, which may edifie: he desires to speak, and to have others to speak that which may feed the soul. The lips of the wise feed many, (saith *Solomon*): so where Christ is, Christs Spirit is thus fed. Thus familiarly have I discovered to you, how you may know whether Christ be in you or no.

Prov. 10. 21.

What if he be not? he must be or else you are reprobates: so saith the Apostle, 2 Cor 13. 5. Know you not that Christ is in you, except you be Reprobates? *He means not eternall reprobates*; but this, *If Christ be not in you, the Devil and corruption are.* Anatomize a carnall man, and what is in him: In his *brain* a company of wicked plots, and devises of the world: in his *Heart*, a deal of love of the world, and of money: in his *Memory* matter of revenge: in his *Conscience*, that which will stare upon him at the day of death; and that which will damn him unlesse he repent. Examine your selves therefore; if Christ be not in you, you are reprobates; and he that hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. I beseech you therefore take a tryall, and enlarge the point in your own meditations: Examine what spirit is in you. If we finde the Spirit of Christ to be in us, (as indeed he is in al his in some measure) what a comfortable state is this? he is the best guest that ever we could entertain in this world: For he doth that to the soul, that the soul doth to the body.

*Quest.
Sol.
Obseri*

The excellency of the Spirits being in us.

Quest. What doth the soul to the body? Whence hath the body the beauty that it hath? whence the vigour that it hath to work with, to move from place to place? whence hath it government to rule it selfe? whence all that is excellent, good, and usefull? from the guest that dwells in it, the soule; for as soon as the soul is out of the body, the body is an ugly deformed thing; a dead creature, unfit for any thing, it cannot stir it selfe: a loathsome thing, it cannot rule it selfe: a meer lump of earth. Now as the soul is to the body, so is Christ to the soule; if he dwell there, there will be a sutablenesse between the *Head* and the *Members*; he will give beauty and loveliness unto it; he will transforme it to his own likeness and Image, that it may be the object of Gods love; that he may love us, not onely because we are in his Son; but because his Sonnes Image is in us. We have not only beauty from Christ dwelling in us, but where he is, he works, and stirs us to all holy and heavenly duties.

Effects of the Spirit of Christ in us.

Where the spirit is, there is often prayer, as Christ often prayed: a perpetuall endeavour of doing good; as his Spirit in him stirred him to goe from place to place to doe good. Where his Spirit is, there is holiness; if we consider what a sweet guest Christ is, where he is, there is all; beauty, work, comfort, strength, and all. And where he is, he is for ever: he never forsakes his lodging, he never forsakes his house and temple: he had two temples built with stone; one by *Solomon*, and another after the captivity: both lye now in the rubbish, and are demolished for ever, and shall never be repayed again: But his spirituall Temples he never leaves wholly; for, whole soules he now dwells in, he will take them by that spirit, that dwells in them, and carry them to heaven, to be where he is. The Divine Spirit that dwells in our soules now, shall quicken our dead bodies, and make them like to his glorious body.

What an excellent honour, and happiness is this, to entertain such a one, as will rule, governe, and adorne our soules while we live, and carry them to himselfe, and to his Father in heaven, and will quicken our bodies likewise? an everlasting inhabitant he is; but here must be an Objection answered.

Object.

Christ doth seeme oftentimes to be absent from the soule to which he was present before: he seems to leave his house, and his Temple sometimes.

Sol.

How Christ is absent from the soul, and leaves it in shew.

I answer, He is said to leave that soule, into which (shutting the door to his knocks, and resisting the sweet motions of his holy Spirit) he never actually entred: But he never leaves that soul into which he is once entred to dwell. Indeed sometimes he conveys himself into a corner of the soule; for when we doe not entertain him, and respect him as we should, and preserve the Motions, Comforts, and Graces of his Spirit, but give way to the suggestions and temptations of the Devill, and ill company, then he retires himselfe; but he is still in the soule: for even as God the Father, when he would have his own beloved Son Christ Jesus to be abased on the Crosse; withdrew not his divinity, but the sense and comforts thereof from Christs humane nature, that he might suffer for us on the Crosse; (loving him still notwithstanding) so that the divi-

nity

unity did not forsake him, but only did rest and cease to support and comfort him at that time, that he might performe the work of satisfaction for our sins: So it is with us, (though it be a different case) when God humbles us for our rashnesse, want of reverence, of carefull walking before him, and preserving the sweet work of his holy Spirit: then Christ hides himselfe only, takes not himselfe away.

Christ was God on the Crosse, but the comfort was withdrawn, that he might suffer: so the comfort of Christs presence is withdrawn, that he may humble us for our former sins, that we may make more of this guest than we did before, that we may be stirred up to entertaine him better, and might be more carefull for the time to come to cleave closer unto him. So much for the answer of that, that Christ is oftentimes in the soul, when he discovers not himselfe to be there; as he was near unto Mary though (her eyes being full of teares) she could not discern him, *Joh 20. 15.*

But how shall I know that he is there by any discovery at all, that he hath any being at all in the soule? Quest.

A man may know he is there: there will be some pulses, some beating of the soul, where Christ and the love of God is, (they ever go together.) *Is there any love of God, any longing after Christs presence? Is there a grieving, when we feel not the comfort we had before?* O this is a signe he hath been there; he hath left somewhat there by his Spirit: though he be retired into a corner of the soule, yet he hath left somewhat behind him to worke a desire of further communion and fellowship with him. As it is *Cant. 5. 5.* When he left knocking at the door, when the Spouse would not open, he left somewhat behind. (the droppings of his fingers) that drew the love of the Spouse to him. So that he never leaves us (no not for to humble, & abase us for our bold walking) but he leaves somewhat in the soule; some desires, some sense of his love, that they think their estate is not good, till they have recovered their former estate. They linger after him, they are never pleased with earthly contentments in this temper of the soul. In desertion they are not themselves; they are not quiet, because they think Christ is lost. As Christs mother when she thought he was lost, was full of we: so a Christian soul, when it conceits that it hath lost Christ, it is never quiet till it have found him again.

Sol.
How Christ is discovered to be in the soul, in a seeming absence.

I

Luke. 2. 48.

Again, Christ may be very neare, and dwell in us sometimes, and we see him not; because we may so dwell upon corruption, & be so full of grief in affliction, that we forget Christ: as Mary, who though Christ was near her, yet could not discern him, her eyes were so full of Teares: and as Hagar, who was so full of grief, that she could not see the fountain appear. There may be (I say) in desertion of soul such grief for our other things crosses, losses, fears, &c. that a man may forget Christ, till he recover himselfe by meditation, prayer, and conference with others, that are more skilfull than himselfe; that can tell what is in him by his pulses, discourse, and desires. Sometimes we must trust the judgement of others better than our own, to know what is in us.

2
John 20. 15.
Gen. 21. 16.

But

Obj. 2. But the soul thinks, *Is the Spirit of Christ in us? will such an holy Spirit, as that we cannot conceive him in the height of his holiness, and greatness, vouchsafe to dwell in such sinfull spirits? we cannot conceive how the Spirit of Christ should dwell in us, that are so corrupt as we are.*

Sol. Indeed I must needs say, it is an Argument of wonderfull love, that Infinite Holiness should be joyned with such corruption; that greatness will be in such narrow straits; that Glory will be in such an obscure place, and habitation, as our souls. Here is a wondrous condescending, admirable mercy it must needs be. But let us not be discouraged, Christ by his Spirit is in us notwithstanding our corruption, because he cannot be a whit corrupted by it. *The Spirit is an active thing, it suffers nothing.* The Spirit is as fire, which is alwayes doing, alwayes in action, it is an active element. So the Spirit of Christ, though it be in us, yet it joyns not with our corruptions. As the Sun beams are pure still, though they shine upon impure and filthy places: as fire consumes drosse, so the Spirit, (being like fire) though it be where corruption is, yet it is there, as an enemy to it; opposing, consuming, and wasting it by little and little.

Quest. But why doth he not doe it all at once?

Sol. There are divers reasons; God will have us to have matter of abasement here, to make us desire to be with him. Yet in the mean time Christ will be so in the Church his Spouse, cleansing and fitting her for himselfe, as that by his Spirit dwelling in her she shall daily oppose, and by little and little subdue and bring under all corruption whatsoever, till at last she have gotten a full and perfect conquest, and triumph over all; all the imaginations, desires and lusts that exalt themselves against the Spirit of Christ, shall be brought down at last: the Spirit will subdue all. Stronger is the Spirit that is in us, than the Spirit that is in the world, thought be in never so little a measure: and therefore by little and little will conquer all within us, without us, the devill, and all at last. Thus much to answer that doubt.

1 John 4. 4.

Use 1. That which further ariseth from hence, that Christ is in us, is not only matter of comfort, but likewise it shews and directs us how to look on other Christians; to look upon them, as the Temples, and houses where Christ dwells. Why should we not reverence, and respect Christians, for the guest that is in them, the Spirit of Christ? If Christ vouchsafe to dwell in such a man, shall he not dwell in our love? shall not one place containe us here, that heaven must contain ere long? we shall be all together in heaven, and shall we not be loving together here? Thus considering that Christ is in all his, how should we respect Christians, that are the habitation of Christ, the *Second Heaven*? For Christ hath but two heavens; the heaven where he is, and the heart of a beleiving Christian, where Christ is, and rules in a comfortable measure, and will rule more and more. How should we value such? not as many cursed devilish spirits, that disgrace and oppose Christ in his members: That which they doe to his Image in his Children, that they would doe to him himselfe, if they had him in their power,

The last Use shall be an Use of direction, how to keep Christ, and to preserve him, and the sense of his being in us with comfort; mark here the dependance, *I have manifested thy Name, that thy love may be in them, and I in them.* Christ is in us then, by manifesting of divine truths; he conveyes himselfe into our hearts, by our understandings, he manifests his truth, the means of salvation, by his ordinance; he manifests divine truths to the Understanding by his Spirit, which goes together with his Word, from the Understanding to the heart, and there he dwells.

Use 2.
Directions
how to keepe
Christ.

Those that care not for the discovery and manifesting of Christs Truth in the Gospell, let them never think to entertain Christ into their hearts; for he will come with his Word and with his own Ordinance: his Word & Spirit alwayes goe together. Therefore let this be one chief direction: If we will have Christ to be in us, to fill our hearts, and remain with us, let us attend upon the blessed meanes of salvation, and be where he is, and then he will be with us; he is in the Church, and he is in every particular member, but especially where his Ordinance is; there is he with the Spirit. God the Father, Sonne, and holy Ghost, are all there, if we have Christ in us. And therefore oft attend upon the Ordinances of God, and communion of Saints, and then you shall find experience of Christ. Christ joyned with the two Disciples when they were talking of him, as they were going to *EMMAUS*: so let us oft stir up the grace of Christ in us, by conferring of good things, and Christ will be with us, joyning with good company, &c.

Luke 24. 15.

Again, would we preserve Christs presence in us? *Labour then that he may dwell largely in our hearts.* Now that which enlargeth the soul is *Humility*; for it empties the soul, and makes it large. *Pride* swells the soul up, and drives out Christ; God gives grace to the humble; Christ dwells in the humble soule. You know he was born in an humble Virgins womb, and he is new borne in the womb of an humble soule. Preserve therefore humble, base conceits of our selves, that in us there is nothing that is good, nothing worthy to be respected, that so Christ may dwell largely in our hearts. Let us have no wit, no reason of our own, contrary to Christs: let us have no wils, no desires, contrary to his. Let us even give up the keyes and the regiment of our souls to him, and then he will dwell largely there: humility keeps him there: *If his Word be our reason, his Commandement our will, & his comfort our joy then he will dwell largely in us;* for there is nothing in us to oppose him: But if we have severall states of soule, distinct from his government, it is no wonder we banish him; when we will not live by faith in him, but by our wits, shifts, tricks, lusts, the examples of others, and by the spirit of the world. It is no wonder (I say) that we favour onely of earthly things, if we live thus: it is no wonder that Christ is not preserved in us, if we be not ruled by his Spirit: it is no wonder that he departs from us, when we set our selves contrary to him, and have wils and reasons of our own, repugnant and disagreeable to his: and wayes to get wealth, and to raise our selves contrary to his Gospel and Truth.

Will

Iohn 3. 8.

Will Christ rule in such a soule? No, he subdues all : the Spirit of Christ is like a mighty wind, (as it is compared by Christ to Nicodemus) that beats all downe before it : If we cherish contrary desires, and contrary delights to Christ, it is no wonder if he delight not to dwell in such a soule.

3

Beg of Christ likewise that he would stay with us : as they in the Gospel, when he made as if he would have gone forward from them, *Luke 24. 29.* constrained him to stay, saying, Abide with us, for it is towards Evening, and the day is far spent : and he went in to tarry with them : So lay we hold on Christ by the means of salvation : stay him with us by prayer and importunity, especially when the night of death, and error, and superstition comes, Say, *Lord, night is near, stay with us, depart not from us :* Lay an holy violence upon God, as Jacob did ; *Thou shalt not go hence :* lay hold on him by prayer, and doe not leave him till we have drawn vertue, and got some blessing from him ; he must be kept by intreaty.

Hos. 13. 4.

4

And then desire him to perfume our souls for his dwelling, as the Church, *Cant. 4. 16.* *Arise O North wind, and blow O South, that my Beloved may come into his Garden :* Desire Christ by his Spirit to blow upon us, that our beloved may come into his garden, that he may find somewhat there to solace himselfe withall ; *Humility, Love, Pitty, large and loving hearts,* (as himselfe had) to doe all good : Desire him to plant these blessed Spices of Grace in our hearts, and that he would blow upon them by his Spirit, that they may prosper and thrive, that so he may come into his Garden, and solace himselfe. Let us still desire further and further communion with him ; never be content. As the Church, *Cant. 1. 1.* *Let him kisse me with the kisses of his mouth :* he hath been familiar, but I desire more still : so every Christian soule, that hath once entertained Christ, is never content, till it be with Christ in heaven ; but still desires a fuller measure of comfort, grace, strength, and assurance. And why doth the soule thus desire after him ? *O his love is better than wine ;* so saith the Church (having had a sense and feeling of his love) *Thy love is sweeter than wine :* and therefore let him kisse me with the kisses of his mouth : therefore a more near communion in his love ; for it is sweeter than wine, being once tasted.

5

And having got enjoyment of communion with God, shut the soule to other things : the comfort of his presence is a heaven upon earth, sweeter than wine, and above all other things to be desired. Take we heed therefore that we grieve not his good Spirit, and force him to retire himselfe : that we quench not his sweet motions by any thing contrary to him. Those that have Guests which they respect, will doe nothing that may be offensive to them ; so let us watch over our souls, that nothing come in, that may grieve Christ ; nor any thing come forth, to grieve his Spirit in us : Let us not thrust our selves into such occasions, and company, as may doe or speake such things as may grieve the Spirit of God in us. Let us neither grieve the Spirit in our selves by cherishing that which is evill in our own hearts, nor by thrusting our selves into the company of those, whom we know by experience will grieve the Spirit.

Spirit: A man cannot goe into bad company, but he must either be grieved, or tainted and corrupted: Who would redeem familiarity, & favour with them? exchange comfort and sense of Christs Spirit for the favour of such men as grieve the Spirit in us? No, a soul that walks in the strength of the comfort of Christs dwelling in him, must be watchfull, and jealous over himselfe, and preserve heavenly motions, cherish them, and make them strong.

But how shall I recover him again, if I have grieved the Spirit, and lost the sense of his being in me?

I will name but one means. *Observe how thou lost it; and recover him by the contrary.* If thou wilt renew the experience of his love, and his dwelling in thee comfortably, consider how didst thou lose him? Was it by negligence? by omission of duties? didst thou not read when thou mightest, or heare when thou mightest? or gavest thou thy thoughts liberty to range? or didst thou not walk with God as thou shouldst? didst thou cast thy selfe into ill company, or cherish carnall desires? take a contrary course then: converse with those that are good; stir up the grace of God in thee by meditation; and by renewing thy purposes and resolutions: heare as much as thou canst; speak to God as much as thou canst; maintaine communion with Saints: as thou lost it, so endeavour the recovery by a contrary way, and then Christ will come again to thy soule. We see *Cant. 5. 3, 6.* that after Christ had stood knocking and calling to his Spouse, (*Open to me my Sister, my Love, my Dove, my undefiled; till his head was filled with dew, and his locks with the drops of the night;*) but found no entrance, he retired, and withdrew himself, because she would not rise and put on her Coat: but afterward when she endeavored her selfe and used contrary means to her former sluggishness, seeking him, and saying, *What is become of my beloved?* Then CHRIST came againe into his Garden, returned to his Spouse, and forgot the former unkindness.

We deal with such a Saviour, that though we lose the sense of his presence for a time; yet if we use contrary means, and knit our selves to his Ordinances, at last we shall re-finde his love to our soules: Nay, he is so loving, so indulgent, that he never upbraids us with our former sins: as we see in *Peter*, whom he upbraided not with his former denyalls.

Who would not maintaine love, respect, and communion with such a Saviour as this? especially considering, what a sweet estate it is, to have Christ with us, at all times, and in all estates, and so to have the love of God? for both go together. And what are all discouragements, where the love of God in Christ is? what are all the creatures to Gods love? to Christ? where the soule is perswaded, that it is in Covenant and peace with God; and when it knowes that Christs Spirit is in it, this is a comfort above all discouragements: whatsoever *Discouragements* are carnall, outward things: the comforts are the presence of *holly* vine things. The Spirit of Christ (whose presence dominates all things) it is precious above all creatures, strength, or wit, yea, and prevalent above

Quest.

Sol.
How to recover Christ being lost.

above all the afflictions and sufferings in the world.

2 Cor. 4. 16.

All afflictions cannot hinder the life of reason; and can they hinder the life of grace? No, Paul saith excellently, The more our outward man decayes, the more the life of Christ is manifest in us. So farre are we from being hurt by any outward sufferings in the world, or discouraged by them, that the life and presence of Christ in us is thereby made more glorious; Christ triumphs, and rules the more, by how much the more outward opposition we have.

Of the excellency of Christ's love being in us.

If Gods love, and (consequently) Christ be in us; what if all the creatures were against us? Is there not more in God, and Christ, than in all the creatures? Made he not all things of nothing? What made the *Martyrs* in the *Primitive Church* to sacrifice their blood so willingly, and cheerfully? because the love of God was manifested to them in Christ Jesus: His Name was manifested, and declared as a sweet ointment poured forth, which caused those Virgins to follow him; the sense and apprehension of the love of God manifested by the Spirit of Christ, begat in them such a love to God againe, that was strong even to death: it ingendred such an heat within, that made them endure all the heat and flame without; so that all the torments which the malice, and wit of persecutors could devise, could not daunt their invincible spirit; but in all these things they were more than Conquerours, through him that loved them, A sweet state it is:

I beseech you therefore every day examin, whether Christ be in you and in what measure he is in you; and labour to give him more roome in your hearts. Will not the contrary daunt us? else we are reprobates, refuse creatures, and the Devill is in us. But if he be in us? he will fit us to be with him: he comes to us, that we may come to be with him; for,

Why doth he dwell in us?

Quest.

Sol.

One maine reason is, to fit us for heaven. Let us labour then, that he may be in us, that he may fit us for himselfe to dwell with him in heaven; labour that none may rule us, but his Spirit. In death what a comfort will it be that Christ is in us? The Spirit of Christ that hath ruled me all my life, shall carry my soule to Heaven, and shall raise my dead body. If Christ be in us, what need we fear Judgement? *Will the Head condemne the Members?* Christ is in us while we live, and therefore joyfully we may expect Judgement. Why? *Our Redeemer, our Saviour, our Head, our Husband, will be our Judge.* Therefore of all estates in the world, get into Christ, and labour by all means to get Christ into us, by Prayer, by getting grace, that he may delight, and so-lace himselfe in us.

Out of Christ, a man is as a branch cut from the Vine, subject to the fire. Out of Him a man is as a member cut from the head, cut from the body: good for nothing, neither lively nor fruitfull. Get into Christ, it is a state of all grace, for all grace is derived to us from him. It is a state of comfort in life and death, and for ever. He is the *Second Adam*:
and

and as all our misery is derived and communicated by being born of the first, from whom sinne, and corruption is derived, and misery with sin; mortall diseases, and all other misery: So as soon as the *Second Adam* is got into us, his Spirit raignes to glory with us; he never leaves us, till he have made us as himselfe. It should be our main endeavour in this world therefore to get out of the cursed estate we are in by nature, and to get into Christ, and then we are safe, for there is more comfort in him, than there was sin and misery in the first.

K k

THE

and as all our misery is derived and communicated by being born
into a world of sin and corruption is derived and communicated by being
born into a world of sin and corruption: So as soon as the world
is brought into this 2^d situation to glory with us; he never leaves
us till he have made us miserable. It should be our main endeavour
in this world therefore to get out of it: and if we are in it by
nature, and to get into Christ, and then we are safe for there is more
comfort in him, than there is in sin and misery in the first.

THE ART OF CONTENTMENT.

In one SERMON.

WHEREIN IS SHEWED,

That this Art of Contentment is a Mystery.
That Gods Children are carried, and know how to behave themselves in variety of Conditions.
How this hard Lesson is learned.
What Infirmities are.
The right use of them.
That Christianity is a busie trade.
The way how one is said to doe all things.
What it is to doe things Evangelically.
When a Christian can doe all things.
Why he failes when he failes.
Where his strength is.
Lastly, The skill to fetch strength from Christ.

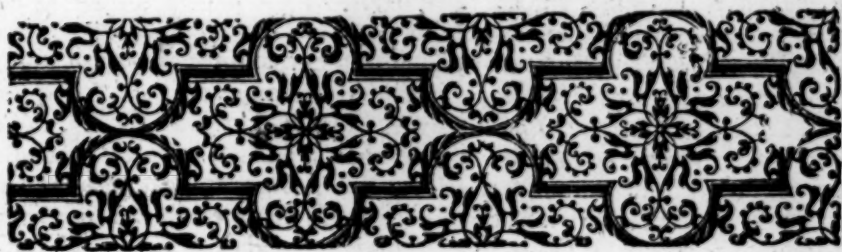


2 Sam. 15. 25, 26. *Then the King said unto Zadok, Carry the Ark of God back again into the City: If I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and shew me both it and the Tabernacle thereof.*

But if he thus say, I have no delight in thee, Behold, here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good in his eyes.

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THE ART OF CONTENTMENT.

SERM. XXII.

PHIL. 4. 11, 12, 13.

I have learned in what estate soever I am to be content. I know how to be abased, and how to abound: Every where, in all things I am instructed, both to be full, and to be hungry; both to abound, and to suffer need. I can doe all things through Christ that strengtheneth me.



THE words are the blessed Apostles concerning himselfe; expressing the glorious power of the Spirit of God in a strong and grown Christian: and are to wipe away the imputation of worldlinesse in the Apostle, serving herein also for a pattern to al Gods Children, that they may learn by his example, that as they must be carefull to avoid all blemishes and imputations, so especially that of worldlinesse, as being most contrary to the profession of a Christian, who hath an *high calling, and whose hope* Philp. 3. 14. *is in heaven.*

The *Philippians* had sent *Paul* some reliefe, and lest they should think, that he expected great matters; he tells them, that he had learned to be content in what estate soever he was.

It is not amiss sometimes for Gods children to speak of themselves, as *Paul* here, as to other good ends, so also to avoid false imputations, in the way of just Apologie; and likewise to be exemplary to weaker Christians. Is not the Doctrine of Contentment, and the power of grace in all estates better learned by this blessed example of *Paul* when he speaks thus of himselfe, *I have learned in what estate soever I am, to be content, to want, and to abound, &c.* than if he had weakly said, Be content with your present condition? The Scriptures be intended for practice, and therefore it is, that there are so many examples in them, to shew the power of Gods Spirit: this is the end of *Pauls* speaking so of himselfe, *I have learned, &c.*

I To come to the words. First, in generall, he sets down the power of Gods Spirit in him, in regard of that blessed grace of Contentment. *I have learned in what estate soever I am therewith to be content:*

2 And then he doth parcel out this Generall into Particular Conditions in this same state, *I know how to be abased, and how to abound. And then*

3 *he wraps up all in generall again. I can doe all things, &c.* But lest this should seeme to be somewhat vain-glorious, *I can doe all things*, as if he were omnipotent, (in some sence indeed a Christian is omnipotent) therefore he adds, *I can doe all things*, but with a blessed correction, *through Christ that strengthneth me.*

I have learned (saith he) *I am instructed.* It is very significant in the Originall, viz. *I am consecrated to this knowledge of Contentment in all estates.* It is a learning not of great persons, or of learned persons, but of holy persons: it is a mysticall knowledge, there is a mystery in it. For as all Religion is a mystery (*Great is the Mystery of Godlinesse*;) not only the speculative part, but likewise the Practicall part of it: So every part of Religion is a mystery; Repentance, a mystery; Faith, a mystery; and this practicall part of contentment in all Conditions, is a great mystery. And therefore *S. Paul* saith, he is instructed in it, as a Consecrated person, having in him the Spirit of God. All the degrees in this world cannot teach this lesson, that *Paul* had learned, *to be contented*: he learned it in no School of the World, not at the feet of *Camelie* he learned it of Christ, and by blessed experience in afflictions. Some grades are reserved for some Estates: he had learned Patience and Contentment in variety of Estates, he had it not by Nature: for he saith, *I have learned.* It is a mysticall thing, not so easily attained unto as the world is fondly perswaded. Your ordinary Christian thinks that Religion is nothing, that it is easily learned: whereas there is no point in Religion, but is a mystery. There is no Christian, but he finds it to be so, when he sets himselfe heartily to go through any religious work; as to humble himselfe, to repent, to goe out of himselfe, and to cast himselfe upon the Mercy of God in Christ; O (will he then say) it is a mystery; there is a difficulty in this work, that I never thought of, till I came to it. And so to be content with our Condition (whatsoever the Case be) to bring our hearts low it is a mystery, Nature never reacheth this, it is learned in the School of Christ, and not without many stripes. We must be Proficients,

cients a good while, before we can learn to any purpose this one lesson of Contentment in any Condition: But the last *Verse* is that which I will now dwell on, wherein we may see three things observable:

First, *That God carries his Children in this world through variety of conditions.* They sometimes want, and sometimes abound; Their Condition is sometimes more comfortable than at others. That is the first Point.

2. The second is, *That in this variety of Conditions, as they know what it is to want and to abound, so in all variety of Conditions, they know how to carry themselves.*

Thirdly, *They know in all variety of Conditions how to avoid the sins incident to that Condition.* As there are graces belonging to every state, so there are sins incident to every Condition. And the Child of God hath learned to practice the one, and to avoid the other.

First, *Gods Children know what it is to want, and to abound by experience.* God leads them through variety of Conditions; Their estate is not alwayes one and the same.

What is the reason of this dispensation in God, thus to rule his Children to bring them to Heaven by variety of Conditions?

Among many other Reasons this is one, *That their graces may be tryed.* Every grace that brings a Christian to Heaven, must be a tryed grace: he must try his *Patience*, his *Contentment*, his *Humility*: How shall these graces be tryed, but in variety of Estates and Conditions? And secondly, how should we have experience of the goodnesse of God, but in variety of estates? When we find the stable, certain, constant love of God in variety of Conditions, that howsoever our Conditions ebbe and flow, be up and down (like the spring weather) sometime fair, and sometimes foule; yet notwithstanding the love of God is constant alwayes, and we have never so sure experience of it, as in the variety of conditions that befall us: then we know that in God there is no shadow of changing, howsoever the changes of our life be. Is it not a point worth our learning to know the truth of our Grace, and to know the constancy of Gods love, with whom we are in a gracious Covenant.

And then again, *we learn much wisdom how to manage our life hereby,* even in the intercourse of our changes, to be now rich, now poor, now high, now low in estate. Wisdom is gotten by experience in variety of estates: he that is carried on in one Condition, he hath no will do me to judge of anothers estate, or to carry himself to a Christian in another Condition, because he was never abased himselfe; he looks very big at him: he knowes not how to tender another, that hath not been in anothers Condition. And therefore to furnish us, that we may carry our selves as Christians, meekly, lovingly, and tenderly to others, God will have us goe to heaven in variety, not in one *uniform* condition in regard of outward things.

Learn hence, not to quarrell with Gods government, for though he alters

1

Quest.

Sol.

Reason

1

2

Use.

alters our Conditions, yet he never Alters his Love. A Christian is unmoveable in regard of the favour of God to him, and in regard of sanctifying Grace: in all moveable Conditions, he hath a fixt Condition; therefore let us not find fault with Gods dispensation, but let him do as he please. So he bring us to heaven, it is no matter what way; how rugged it be, so he bring us thither.

2. Point. The second Generall thing is this, *That in this variety of Conditions, Gods Children know how to carry themselves.* As they know what it is to want, and to abound; so they know how to abound, and be abased as they should doe. For there is no Condition but a Christian may pick good matter out of it. As a good Arts-man will make a good piece of work of an ill piece of matter sometimes, to shew his skill; so a Christian can frame matter that is good out of any Condition: he knows how to want, and how to abound, and that with the expression of graces too. He can practice the graces that ought and may be practiced in all conditions. For instance, He can abound, that is, with expressing the Graces that should be in abundance, which is, *Thankfulnesse to God*: he hath, in abundance, a spirit of Thankfulnesse: he hath a spirit to be a faithful Steward in abundance: a spirit to honour God with his abundance. He hath a spirit to be humble in abundance, knowing all is as grasse, and the flower of the field. He can be humble, he can stoop under the mighty hand of God. he can have experience in the abasement of the vanity of worldly favour, and worldly greatnesse, he learns what it is; And so he can learn Patience, and all other Graces, that are to be practiced in a mean estate. It were too long to name particulars, a Christian can do this; Grace is above all Conditions, it can manage and rule all estates of life, it makes them serviceable to its own ends. A gracious man is not dejected overmuch with abasement: he is not lifted up overmuch with abundance, but he carries himself in an uniform manner, becoming a Christian in all Conditions.

- The third Generall thing is, *He can want, and he can abound, without tainting himselfe over-much with the sins of those Conditions.* For instance, He can abound without Pride, though it be an hard matter: Abundance works upon the soul of a man; he had need to have a strong brain, that digests Abundance: it is a wild untamed thing. And we see by experience in Gods Children, how hard a matter it is for them to manage Abundance. We see how it wrought upon Solomon and David they were better in adversitie; and yet notwithstanding the Child of God hath grace even to overcome the sins that are incident to Abundance. He hath Grace to be lowly minded in a great estate; not to trust to uncertaine riches: he knowes by the Spirit of God what they are, and that he hath an inheritance of better things in another world, which teacheth him to set a light esteeme upon all things below.

- And so for dejection; the sin that we are subject to fall into in want, is, putting forth our hands to evill means, to shift. Gods Childe can learn to want without tainting his Conscience with ill courses, and then he can want without impatience, without too much dejection of spirit;

as if all were lost : when as indeed, a Christian in a manner is rich all alike. For God is his portion, and howsoever a Beam may be took away, the *Sun* is his : take away a stream, the *Spring* is his : in the poorest estate, God All-sufficient is his still : and so in a manner a Christian is rich all alike. God never takes away himselfe ; he knows this : and therefore he can want, he can be abased, as long as he hath the Spring of all. Though a *Cistern* be took away, he cares not, he can want, and abound, without murmuring, without dejection of spirit. Whereas those that have not been brought up in Christs Schoole, nor trained up in variety of Conditions, are able to doe nothing ; if they abound, they are proud ; if they be cast down, they murmur and fret, and are dejected, as if there were no Providence to rule the World, as if they were fatherlesse Children. This is the excellency of a Christian ; That as he knowes what it is to abound by experience, so he knows how to abound with the practice of the Graces, and how to want with the avoiding of the snares, that usually are in that condition.

But hath a Christian learned this at the first.

No, he learns it not very easily, nor very soon. *Selfe-denyall is the first lesson in Christs School* : to have no wit of our own, further than Christs wisdom : to have no will of our own, further than his Commandement guides us : And he that hath learned Self-denyall, he is in a great way to learne this blessed lesson of *Contentment* in any Condition whatsoever : so that every Christian hath some degree of that, as he can deny himselfe. But there are many things to be learned before we can come to carry our selves wisely in any Condition.

For besides *Selfe-denyall*, we must learn the *Doctrin of the Covenant of Grace*. That God in Christ is become a Father to us, and carries a fatherly mind to us, in what condition soever we are, he is a Father still, and intends us well, and will provide for us in the hardest condition, having took the relation of a Father upon him, doe you think, that he will faile in the carriage of a Father towards us ? He is pittifull to us, he respects us in the basest condition : he that knows God to be his Father, cast him into what condition you will, knowes he hath a good portion.

And then we must know the *Doctrin of the Providence of this Father*, that all shall worke together for the best to those that love him : Want, and Abundance, Prosperity, & afflictions whatsoever : God by his overruling power will bring all things to this blessed issue, to help forward the eternall good of his Children. A man must know this, and divers the like things, that are to be known, before he can learn this blessed Lesson of *Contentment*. There is a *Venome*, and a *Vanity* in every thing, without *Grace*, wherewith we are tainted ; but when *Grace* comes, it takes out the sting of all ill, and then we find a good in the worst. There is a vanity in the best things, and there is a good in the worst ; *Grace* picks out the good out of the worst : as God turns all to good, so *Grace* finds good in every condition. The Spirit of God sanctifies a Christian to all Conditions, and sanctifies every Condition to him. Now I beseech you think of this, that I have said, which I wish without further enlargement, may

Gen. 17. 1.

Object.

Ans.

1 Self-denyall.

2 The Covenant.

3 Providence.
Rom. 8. 28.

may adde to your care, and desire to be in the happy condition of Christians. What a blessed thing is it to be in the Covenant of Grace, to have God to be our Father, to be in Christ, that let our Condition outwardly be what it will be, we shall have Grace to carry our selves in it, God will go along with us by his holy Spirit? What a blessed thing is it, in all the uncertainties of the world, to have a certain rule to go by, as a Christian hath, which carries him along in all the uncertainties in this world? None but a Christian hath this. *I have learned*, saith Paul. When did he learn it? not before he was a Christian. This I could desire to presse (but that I have other things to speak of) to make us in love with Religion, with the state of Christians, that is thus above all Conditions whatsoever, and can rule all other Conditions. A Christian is not at the Mercy of the world, his Contentment is not a dependant Contentment, You may cast him into prison, you may impoverish him, you may labour to debase and disgrace him; But can you take away his comfort? Can you take away his grace? Can you take away the Love of God? No, God will rather increase all upon him; For *the best things of a Christian are not at the mercy of the world, nor at the mercy of his severall conditions. Prosperity and Adversity*, these are out of him: he hath a state depending upon the good will and pleasure of his Father, that loves him better than he loves himselfe; and out of love will worke good out of the worst condition that can befall him. So I hasten to that which followes.

Having spoken in particular, then he comes to the Generall, where in he wraps up all: *I can doe all things, but in Christ that strengthens me.* Here is,

First of all, *The blessed Apostles ability, I can doe all things.*

And then here is secondly, *The Spring of his Ability, whence he hath it, I can doe all things: but in Christ that strengthens me.*

In the Apostles Ability, you have,

1 *His Strength it selfe.*

2 *The Enlargement of it.*

4. Point. [*I am able.*] And what to doe? A few things? No, [*All things.*] The Point of Doctrine offered is this, That *A Christian man is an able man.* Whosoever hath the Spirit of Christ is an able man, and his Ability is a large ability; He is able to do all things. Take *Doing* in a transcendent sense, not onely to doe, but take it to resist Ill, to resist Temptation, to suffer Affliction, to enjoy Prosperity, to break off Sinfull courses, and to take a new course, to practice all Duties: for so the Apostle means (*I can doe*) that is, I can carry my self in all Conditions, I can expresse all Graces, I can resist all Temptations, I can suffer all Afflictions, I can do all this: What is the Reason a Christian is so able?

Reason
1 Because, first of all, *He hath a stronger and abler spirit than his own:* The Spirit of God is a spirit of strength, 2 Tim. 1.8. it is the Spirit of power, which is the soul of his soul, and the life of his life. Now the strength of a man is in his spirit, the stronger spirit makes the abler man, and the Spirit of God being the strongest of spirits, (indeed the strength of spirits) it makes a Christian in whom it dwels, the ablest man.

And

And the n again, *A Christian is a new Creature* : therefore he is furnished with Abilities fit for the new Creature. When *Adam* was created, he was endued with all graces fit for & intire state : As when God made *Heaven*, he made *Stars* to beautifie Heaven : When he made the *Earth* he made Trees and Flowers : So, when he made Man, he furnished him with Graces, and fitted him for that estate. Now after the Fall, when God brings a man in Christ to be a new Creature, he hath Abilities to furnish him for that new Condition.

And then again, *Every particular Grace of the new Creature is a Grace of Strength*. As the Spirit is a strong Spirit, so the Spirit of Love is as strong as Death, it hath a *constraining* power : The Spirit of God is so strong in his Children, that are truly his, that it makes them even with willingnesse to lay down their lives, that is dearest to them in this world. Here is a sweet kind of Tyranny in the affection of Love, that will carry a man through Thick and thin, through all, and that with pleasure, willingly and comfortably too : As the Apostles were glad to suffer any thing for Christs sake, their hearts were so enlarged with a spirit of Love. The spirit of Faith it is a strong and mighty spirit, an able spirit, it conquers God himself, as *Jacob* wrestled with the wrestlings of God, and by the strength of God overcame God. And the Woman of Canaan overcame Christ by the strength she had from Christ. In the sense of Gods displeasure it will beleve Gods favour in Christ, and is able to break through the thickest Clouds of Discomfort whatsoever, and to see the loving face of God. In a base condition it can struggle with God saying with *Jab*, *Though he kill me, yet will I trust in him* : it is a strong grace, Faith prevails with Almighty God, it prevails in all inferiour conditions whatsoever. You see the fruit and strength of all Graces is attributed to Faith, *Hebr. 11. 33* by Faith they overcame, by Faith they were strong, and did this, and that : insinuating, that Faith is not only a strong Grace in it selfe, but it gives vigour and strength to all Graces. And so we see Love, *1 Cor. 13. 4*. it is not only a strong Grace, but the office of other Graces is attributed unto it : It suffers long, which is the office of *Patience*. What should I speak of other Graces, these radical and fundamentall graces being of such force? Now every Christian in some measure hath a spirit of Faith, and a spirit of Love, and these are very strong to carry him through all estates and conditions : And that with such glory and lustre, that every one may wonder at the condition of a Christian : even in the worst estate, he hath a spirit not of the world but above the world : this faith overcomes the world, and he that is in them (the Spirit of God) is stronger than he that is in the world.

Cor. 5. 14.

Hos. 12. 3. 4.

Mat. 15. 28.

Job 13. 15.

To proceed to a further demonstration of a Christian mans ability, which is intimated unto us in his very name. What is the name of a Christian? *Anointed*. The Spirit of God is compared to Oyle. What is the vertue of Oyl? It is to make nimble, for the Spirit of God makes Christians nimble : and Oyle it makes strong. The Wrestlers were wont to be anointed before hand with Oyle : so the Spirit of God makes Christians

The Christi-
ans name.

stians strong : The Vertue of Oyle anynting is to be above ; jumble it together with other liquors, it is a Regall Liquor, it will have the pre-eminence, and be above : so Grace, although it be mingled with corruption, the Spirit of Grace and Faith at last will appeare, the Spirit of God will be above all, at length it will work it selfe clear. In all temptations, a Christian, as a Christian, is an able man : if he be answerable to his own Name, if he be not an Hypocrite, he hath an ability in him, he can doe more than the world.

Use 1.

First of all then, learne here, That Religion is not a matter of word, nor stands upon words, as wood consists of Trees ; To speak thus and thus, it may come from Parts, from Memory, and Wit : but Religion is a matter of Power, it makes a man able. It made *Paul*, What ? to *speake only* ? No, his Learning made him able to *do* all things : it is a matter of practice, and there is nothing so speculative in Religion, but it tends to practice. Religion is an Art, not of great men, not of mighty men, but of holy men : it is an Art, and Trade : a Trade is not learned by words, but by experience : and a man hath learned a Trade, not when he can talk of it, but when he can work according to his Trade. So we see *Paul* shewes his Learning he speaks of before, by his Ability. The point of the *Trinity*, it is a speculative point, and it tends to practice. First, to be a foundation of our worship, that we worship one God in Three Persons. And then it tends to shew the unity among Christians, that God will worke among Christians at length, that they shall be all one, in some sort, as the Father, Sonne, and holy Ghost are one : which though it be a point of high and deepe speculation, yet it tends to practice. Now if the sublime, and high Points do, what point is there in Religion, but it tends to practice ? And therefore let us not please our selves, that we have deep understandings, but let us shew our Understandings by our practice, as the sheep shews how he thrives in his Pasture, by his Wooll and Fleece : So shew how thou profitest in Religion, by being inabled with the Power of Grace : that carries thee through all conditions, to avoid the sins, and to expresse the Graces in such conditions : so much Grace as thou hast to carry thy selfe thus, so much Ability thou hast, and so much Religion.

Use 2.

If a Christian be an able man, I beseech you let it serve to try our selves by this scantling that I have spoken of. Is Christianity a point of strength, and ability ? Let us try the truth of our estate then : thou wouldest be a Christian : What canst thou doe then ? What sinne canst thou resist ? What canst thou beare ? What holy duty canst thou doe ? How canst thou enjoy the good Blessings that God sends thee, without defiling of thy self with those blessings ? That thou art not proud of the Riches, nor of the Honour thou hast ? Grace manageth all Conditions. Thus if thou be a Christian, answer thy Name, if not, thou art an Hypocrite yet. For a Christian in some measure is able to doe all things, through Christ that strengthneth him. I beseech you let us not deceive our selves ; the best of us all may mourne for our want in this kind ; our Consciences tell us, that we might have done a great deale more than

then we have, That God would have inabled us, (if we had not been false hearted, and betrayed our selves, and been negligent in the use of the meanes) to have done a great deal more then we do. What a shame is it for Christians, that indeed have some truth of grace in them, that they cannot be a little abased in the world, but they are all *Almoss*. Where is the power of Grace now? They cannot be lift up in their condition a little, but they will scarce know their brother of low degree. Where is Religion now? What hast thou more then a Worldling in thee? Nay, a Heathen out of principles of Mortality, would conform his carriage outwardly better then thou. Let us be ashamed therefore when we finde any murmuring or rising of our corrupt natures in any condition whatsoever, and know that this becomes not a Christian. This is that which the Apostle presseth so oft, that we should carry our selves as becommeth Christians. Oh doth this become a Christian? A Christian should be able to do all things through Christ that strengthened him. What a shame is it for a Professor of Religion to be as worldly, as distracted with cares, as passionate (if he be a little moved) as a man that professeth no Religion at all: Where is the power of godliness? Where is the glory and credit of Religion here? I beseech you be ashamed, and know that your profession requireth, that you *should be able to withstand corruptions, and resist temptations.*

Again, this answers the common objection of carnall men, who warde of all Reproofs with this, Tell them of their faults, Why it is their Infirmary, and their weakness (they say) Is it so? Art thou a Christian or no? If thou beest a Christian, thou labourest for strength against thy weakness, and dost not make a Plea for it. There is weakness indeed in the best, but that is the matter of their *Humiliation*, and the object of their Mortification. It is not their Plea for idleness, to give up themselves to sinful courses. Men are apt to make a false Plea for their infirmities. There is no infirmity in a carnal man, who wants the Spirit of Christ. Such a one is dead, there is no weakness in a dead person. In regard of civil carriage, there may be weaknesses in such a man: he may be passionate and froward, unbeseeming a civil man, but that is not the Ranke we speak of. None can have infirmities but a Christian, that hath the life of Grace in him sincerely. Therefore if thou hast no truth of grace, never plead thy Infirmary. But further to discover infirmities, I shall rank them in three Heads.

In the first rank of infirmities, are imperfections in good actions, which are either distractions, or deadness in prayer, meditation, and hearing, or invincible infirmities, of which one said well, *Lord deliver me from my miserable necessities.* A man may be in such a state sometimes, in regard of the temper of his body being out of tune, that he cannot pray as he would do, the Spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak, saith *Our Saviour*. There was almost an invincible necessity on the Apostles then.

Again, we might resist, and walk more chearfully, but for some distempers of the body, which oft times unfit for duty. This we call the *Infirmary* of a Christian, because he groans under it, and is ashamed of it.

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Again,

Use 3.

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are.

I

2 Again, Infirmities are those indeliberate Passions that carry us to actions against our minde, when a man is hurried with a tempest of passions, to do that, which he understands not himself well in.

3 Lastly, It is an infirmity, when we are hindered from doing of duty through passion, upon surprizal of some great fear, or terroure, whereby our zeal is cooled, that we are not so bold to stand out in the cause of Christ as we should. *Peter* was surprized with such a timorous Spirit, that he thought he should loose his life in following Christ: this was his Infirmity at that time, which he lamented bitterly.

March. 6. 7.

The Case of a
fin of Infir-
mity lived in.

For we must know, that infirmities are not, when we live in them. Customary sins are not sins of infirmity, but when a man is suddenly overtaken, and falls unwittingly. Only in some cases a man may live in a sin of infirmity, when the ground of the infirmity is rooted within him, and he not able to vanquish the same: As for instance, *A man by temper prone to anger, may live long in that infirmity, being inordinately peevish and froward, because he carries about him a frame of body, inclining thereunto.* Now he that lives in such an infirmity, repents daily, and gets ground of it, he is still hewing at the root, and at length, at the last stroak it falls, and he gets victory over it.

Again, a sin of infirmity is not a sin that we plead for. A man is ashamed of his infirmities, and grieves for them; but when men plead for their infirmities, and makes them a shelter (and covering) to go on in sinful courses, these are not infirmities. Therefore whosoever pleads for sin, manifests a false heart. *His sins are Enormities, not Infirmities.*

A Christian gets the better of Infirmities. After he falls, he rises stronger and stronger still; but men that grow worse and worse, and are habituated in an evil course, this is not infirmity, because he grows not out of it. Let us not deceive our selves with this Plea, to say, *It is my weakness.* A Christian should be ashamed to say so. He should be able to do all things through Christ, and manifest that he hath strength above nature in him, which is the second branch.

Christianity a
busie Trade.

God.

To come to that therefore, Remember, that many things are required of a Christian. Christianity is a busie trade. If we look upon God, what a world of things are required of a Christian to carry himself aright before such an infinite Diety? A Spirit of Faith and Love, a Spirit of Circumspection, A Spirit of Joy and Delight in him above all. And if we look on men, there are duties for a Christian in every Condition and Relation he stands in. A Spirit of subjection to *superiors*; towards *Equalls* to carry a spirit of Love, and to *Inferiors* a spirit of pity and bounty. If we look to *Satan*, we have many duties to resist him, and to watch against the Tempter. If we look to the *World*, it is full of snares: there must be a great deal of spiritual watchfulness, that we be not surprized. If we look to our *selves*, there are required many duties, to carry our Vessels in honour, and to walk within the compass of the holy Ghost, to preserve the peace of our consciences, to walk answerable to our worth, as being the Sonnes of God, and Co-heires with Christ. The state of a Christian is no idle condition. Sometimes a Christian is in this state, sometimes in that; and then he must have

Satan.

World.

Our selves.

have these graces, and anon use other graces; he must have a suite of all graces, fit for all conditions. Now answerable to the variety of all the duties that are required of him, he must have ability; and therefore the Apostle saith, *I can do all things through Christ.*

So then the Point of Doctrine is this, That *the tryall of a sincere Christians estate, is universality of obedience.* 3. Point. Universality of carriage in all conditions, is the tryal of Christian sincerity, he must dispense with himself in no sin, and he must be a Vessel prepared for every good work, a Vessel of Glory, (as the Apostle speaks) he must baulk no service that God calls him to. What is the reason of this?

The Reason is, because a Christian hath the sanctifying Spirit, and the sanctifying Spirit hath the seeds of all Graces in it, so that where it is, there is the subduing of all sin in the root. And then all Graces are answerable to the Commandements of God in all duties, and to the avoiding of all sins: And therefore James saith pregnantly to this purpose, he that offends in one, is guilty of all. 1. Reason. James 2. 10

Let us take heed we plead not immunity and freedom from some things, and think that the good we do in some kind, may excuse the bad we do in others. You have some that will take liberty in an unclean conversation, because they are bountiful, and liberal: and they will take liberty to be oppressing in their Callings, because they attend upon the means of salvation. Oh no, take heed of that carriage, that is against the Profession of Religion; there must be an universal disposition to all Graces, and to all Duties, though they be never so contrary, and crosse to corrupt nature. The Devil knows well where to have some men, for he sees they minde some sin, and are careless in the practice of other duties; and therefore in the houre of Temptation, the Devil will surprize, and it will be a ground of despair, if they take not heed. Put the case a man will say this, *I can part with all things else, oh, but I cannot die: I can be content to be imprisoned, but I cannot indure to be disgraced: Let a man dispense and favour himself but in one thing, and when the time comes, he will be discovered to be but an Hypocrite; then Satan will work upon that, and there he will be shaken in his condition; by reason that he did not learn self-Denyall perfectly, he hath not grace disposing him to the practice of all Christian Duties: he hath not learned to know God in Covenant, to supply his wants of Honour, Credit, Wife and Children, and all that he is to part withall for Christs sake. Now he that hath not learned this in resolution (though God do not yet call him to it) by entring into his own soul, and asking himself what he can part with, and what he can resist for Christs sake, What can I endure? What can I suffer? If his heart do not tell him, I can part with all, I will rather endure death it selfe, rather indure shame, or any thing, than break the peace of a good Conscience, and grieve the Spirit of God. If he cannot answer his soul thus, surely I can speak little comfort to that man: For we see a Christian must be able to do all things: that is to resist all ill, to practice all duty, to break off all sinful courses.* Vñ.

Quest. But some will object, *May not a Christian be subject to some especial sin?*

Ans. Yes, he may; God, for especial purposes sometimes, will have men of eminent graces to be subject to notable Infirmities. But what, do they plead for them? No, but as by temper, or by former custom, or as they finde themselves more inclined one way than another; so they gather strength especially against their especial sin. And in the beginning of conversion, there is a blow given to the reigning sin, that was before; and as when *Goliath* was slain, all the rest fled; So Grace strikes at the *Goliath*; in conversion, there is a main stroke given unto sin. Perhaps somewhat remains still, that grace will be hewing at, and therefore Grace may stand with an especial sin, that a man is inclined to. But this he labours to get all strength against, as other, so strength of direction. You shall finde a Christian when he is subject to any infirmity, he will speak more learnedly, and more judiciously with greater detestation against that sin that he is most prone unto, than against any other; *He labours to make up the breach where the Wall is weakest*: So a man may be a good man, and be subject to an infirmity, but then he gathers more strength against it.

1 Sam. 17. 51.

Use 2. Well, you see then a *Christian is able to do all things through Christ that strengthens him*. I beseech you, let us often enter into our selves, and make an *Use of Tryall* also of that which hath been spoken, what we can do, what we can part with, what we can resist, let us never think our selves to be in such an estate, as is fit to be, to comfort our selves, till we can in truth and sincerity of heart renounce all whatsoever. *Tet notwithstanding, this must be understood Evangelically, I can do all things: What legally without any flaw?* No, I can do all things so far forth, as shall shew that I am a true Christian, and not an Hypocrite: so farre as shall be beautiful in the eyes of others, to allure them to the embracing of Religion: so far as shall make base spirits to envy to see my even carriage, and to see the power of Religion: so far as shall put the world to silence for reproaching; so far as I shall enjoy assurance of the truth of grace, so far as Satan shall not get his will in every sin. Our obedience is Evangelical, and not Legall.

The way how a Christian is said to do all things.

Quest.

Ans.

What it is to do things Evangelically.

Now what is it to do all things *Evangelically*? (to clear that Point) To do all things *Evangelically*, is first of all for a man to know that he is in the state of grace, and that he hath his sins pardoned, and that he is accepted in Christ to Life and Salvation: that is the ground of all Evangelicall obedience. He must know that he is in the Covenant of Grace: that he hath the forgiveness of his sins, and a right to Life everlasting in Christ. And then comes obedience answerable to that Condition: that is, a desire to obey God in all things; a grief that he cannot do it so well as he would: a prayer that he might do it so; and an endeavour together with prayer, that he may do so, & some strength likewise with endeavour. For a Christian (as I said before) he hath the Spirit of God, not only to set him to endeavour, but to give him some strength. So there is a desire, and purpose, and prayer, and grief of heart, and Endeavour, and likewise some strength in *Evangelicall* obedience.

A Christian then in the Gospel can do all things when he hath his sins forgiven, and is accepted in Christ, when he can endeavour to do all, and desire to do all, & in some measure practice all duties in truth. *For the Gospel requires truth, and not perfection*; that is, the perfection that brings us to Heaven in Christ our Saviour. We have title to Heaven, in him is the ground, because forgiveness of sins is in him. Now a Christians life is but to walk worthy of this, and to fit himself for that glorious condition that he hath title unto by Christ, to walk sincerely before God: *Sincerity is the perfection of Christians*. Let not Satan therefore abuse us; *We do all things, when we endeavour to do all things, and purpose to do all things, and are grieved when we cannot do better*. For mark, this goes with Evangelical obedience alwayes; God pardons that which is ill, for he is a Father, he hath bound himself to pardon, *I will pitty you as a Father pittieih his Child*. From the very relation, he hath took upon him; we may be assured he will pitty, and pardon us, and then he will accept of that which is good, because it is the work of his own Spirit, and will reward it; this in the Covenant of grace he will do. A Christian can do all then, and wherein he fails, God will pardon him; what is good, God will accept and reward; and what is sick and weak in him, God will heale, till he have made him up in Christ.

When a Christian can do all things.

Psalm 103. 13.

Thus we see in what sense this is to be understood; *A Christian can do all things through Christ*; For as it is said of Gold, *the best gold you have, hath allowance of such grains*; so take the best Christian, you must have some allowance, some imperfection cleaves to him, he cannot do all perfectly, for then what need the Covenant of Grace? He can do all things so as he flies to the mercy of God in Christ for life everlasting; He can do all things required of a Christian in the Covenant of grace, in regard of sincerity. These things must be well and soundly understood, and then we can take no offence at the Doctrine.

What is the cause, that a Christian failes then when he doth fail? A Christian failes, when he doth not understand the Promises of the new Covenant of Grace; That God hath given not only Promises of the pardon of sin, but of all kinde of graces, a promise of the Spirit in generall; he will give his Spirit to those that aske it: and a promise of every other particular grace, that he will write his Law in our hearts, and he will teach us to love one another, and he will put his fear into our hearts. *We have not a grace, but either there is a promise of it generally or specially*. Now when a Christian forgets this, he failes for want of understanding the Priviledges and Promises.

Quest. Answ. 1.

Again, he failes for want of Wisdom, to plant himself in such helps, whereby he might be able to do all things; for it is the folly sometimes of Christians to be rash in venturing upon occasions; and then he hath no more strength than Sampson had when he adventured; he loseth his strength, when he ventureth rashly: But if a Christian be wise, to keep out of Temptation, and to keep himself in good Company and Acquaintance, using holy meanes, and helps to godliness, wherein the Spirit works, a wise Christian may perform all.

Again, *for want of Resolution: A Christian goes not out alwayes with his spiritual armour, as he should*: He goes not out with a purpose to please God in all things, and to avoid all sins; but his armour is loose about him. If a Christian would resolve, in the power of God, to break through all difficulties, and to do all duties, God would second him: *Arise and be doing, and the Lord will be with thee*. Let a Christian go on constantly in a good way, and he shall finde experience of Gods helping of him: Without manly resolutions, a Christian fails.

Quest.

What is the reason, that a Christian many times stands in strong and great duties, and is foyled in little duties?

Ans.

Because he is watchful in the one, and carelesse in the other. Indeed it is want of will: if we would have strength, and would carry our selves manfully, we might have grace to carry our selves even, to the glory of our profession, and to the credit of it. But we willingly favour corruption, and are not willing to put it out of our selves to the utmost: Whereupon we want much comfort, that Christians should enjoy, and hereupon come many breaches in our life. In a word, if a Christian were careful, there is no duty, but he might perform it in some measure: *He may go wondrous high upwards, alwayes with this Exception, that he never look to be justified by it*: For God hath not established the Covenant so; that is done by Christ. Again, if he be carelesse, he may sink wondrous low; There is no sin, but the sin against the holy Ghost, but he may fall into it in some manner.

I hasten to the last point: *I can do all things*; but how? with what strength? *Through Christ that strengthneth me*.

Sol.
Objct.

This is to salve up an Objection, which might be made against the blessed Apostle, [*I can do all things*.] Here is a proud word: Oh no, [*It is in Christ that strengthens me*.] S. Paul was wondrous cautious and careful to avoid spiritual Pride, or the least touch of it, as it is 1 Cor. 15. 10. *Not I, (saith he:) he checks himself presently, I laboured more than they all: Not I, but grace within me*. Of all other sins, take heed of spiritual pride, check it presently: [*I can do all*.] oh but lest proud thoughts should arise, [*It is in Christ that strengthneth me*.] My strength is out of my selfe; as the heads of those Rivers, that run through Paradise, and that watered the City of God, they were out of Paradise; so the head and spring of those streames that water the Church of God, and particular Christians, they are out of themselves, they are in Christ. It is otherwise with us, then it was in the first Adam: he had strength, and had no promise to stand, he had power to stand, if he would: but a Christians strength is out of himselfe; in the second Adam Christ. And it is well, that it is in the keeping of so strong a Saviour, for we should forfeit it as Adam did, if it were in our own hands. It is derived to us, as much as he thinks good; but the spring is in him: and we have not only a will, but the promise and ability to do good; we do all through Christ.

Point.

So the Point of Doctrine is this, That the Original of a Christians strength is in Christ. God is the original of all strength; But God himself hath no intercourse of the New Covenant with man, out of the second

cond Person: all our Comfort, and all our Grace, it comes through Christ, who having taken our Nature upon him, and having satisfied God, is fit to derive all Grace and Comfort to us: For he is near us, he is of our Nature, and God in him is well pleased: So as we may now go boldly to Christ; we are bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh. God himself out of Christ is a consuming fire; Now in Christ, God favours man, he is gracious and lovely to us, and we to Him, because Christ his beloved Sonne hath took our nature upon him, and now in our nature he is in Heaven. So Christ the Mediator, is the Fountain of all strength, he is the spiritual *Joseph*, that had laid up store for all *Egypt*, and all that came: he is the High Steward of his Church; the Second in the Kingdom of Heaven; he is the *Joseph*, he, dispenseth all Riches and Treasures; all are in him for the Churches sake. In him we do all things: as we can do all things for him, as a Mediator, that dyed for us, and procured favour for us; so we can do all things in him, as an head to whom we are united: For there must be Union before there can be Communion. As in Mariage there must be an Uniting before there be a Communion of Estates, and Conditions; so before we can do any thing for Christ, we must be in Christ. We have all as through Christ, as in Christ; thence comes Communion with Christs Spirit: so then it is Christ by his Spirit, for he doth all by his Spirit: the Lord is that Spirit, 2 *Cor.* 3. 17. Christ doth all in the Church by his Spirit. Now the Spirit is the Union of Christ, he strengthens all, all our strength is by Christs Spirit. Now this Spirit of God first sanctifies Christ, the humane Nature of Christ, before he sanctifieth us: we have all grace and power, and strength at the second hand, it comes not from Christ as God immediately. And Grace comes not from the holy Ghost immediately to us; but the holy Ghost first sanctifies Christ his humane Nature, and then he sanctifies us, and we out of Christs fulness receive grace for grace. The same Spirit that sanctified his Nature in the Wombe of the Virgin, and that sanctified his holy Nature that now he hath in Heaven with him; the same Spirit is sent from him to sanctifie every member of the Church: all is in the Head.

As first, the Oyntment was powred on *Aarons Head*, and from thence it ran down to the skirts of his Garments: so all grace is powred upon the Head of Christ first, and then from him upon the skirts, even upon the meanest *Christian*, as answerable to their portion: and to those things that God meanes to call them to, they have grace to carry them. You see then how to conceive of this, how we have all in *Christ*, that is, by the Spirit of Christ, and how it comes by the Spirit.

First of all then, you see here how these two agree; A Christian, when he is a Christian, hath freedom of will and power; he hath power, and freewill, as far as he is freed by the Spirit of *Christ*, so far as he is free. For, 2 *Cor.* 3. 17. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. So *Job.* 8. 36. *Christ* sayes, If the Sonne shal make you free, then you shall be free indeed. He can do all things, therefore he is free. But it is in *Christ*, therefore his freedom is from him. We speak, but it is *Christs* Spirit that

Ephes. 6. 10

that openeth our mouth : we believe, but it is Christ by his Spirit that opens our hearts to believe, we are mighty, but it is in God : we are able to do great matters, but it is in Christ that strengthneth us: we are strong, but it is in the Lord, as it is written, *Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*. The understanding is ours, the Affections are ours, the Will is ours, but the sanctifying of all is this, and the carriage of all these supernaturally about themselves, to do them spiritually, that is not ours, but it is Christs : So we see what is ours, and what is not ours. We are able to do, but the strength and the grace, and ability is from Christ. A winde Instrument sounds, but the man makes it sound by his breath. We are like wind Instruments; indeed we sound, but no further than we are blown upon; and we yield musick, but no further than we are touched by the Spirit of God : We are light, but as the Ayre is, as it is enlightned by the Sun : and therefore we must understand these Points, that God may have glory, and that we may know what is ours.

D. H.

And then again, we see here, *That we have in Christ not only a generall ability, that we are able; but we have the very act it self, the deed it self*; He strengthneth us, There is a spiritual life, and a spirituall power and will, and then the act and deed it selfe. Now we have not only from Christ the life of grace at the first, and then a spiritual power answerable to that again, whereby our powers are renewed; so as we are able to do something in our will: but we have the deed it selfe, the doing is from Christ, he strengthneth us for the present. Now you have some that reach loosely this Point, That we have general universal grace, whereby we are enabled, if we will, to believe, and to do this thing, if we will: but I say that this is not all; but we have the will and the deed it self from Christ by his spirit, and in every holy action, Christ helps us to do these things in very deed. First, he moves the soul to the action, and applies the soul to the thing; by the spirit he doth this: for though we have power, we could not exercise it but by the spirit, in this or that particular act. Again, he works a preserving of the Grace in that act, God preserves his own work against temptation, and against impediments: for there is no act, but it is opposed. The Devil is in every good work, either at the beginning to hinder it, or at the end to defile it, one way or other. Now God preserves his own work by his Spirit. First, he moves us to do, and then he preserves us in doing, and arms us against the impediments of good works. Then he determines the good work, and limits it, how far we shall do well, thus far, and thus far: the degrees come from Christ. For sometimes he doth it by his glorious power (as Paul saith) sometimes we are strengthned to do more, and sometimes lesse, as he will: not only the act it selfe, and the application of the soul, and the preserving of Grace in every act, (we sink else) but the degree, that we do sometimes better, it comes from Christ, now strengthning of us more, and now lesse, as he sees good.

Know (by the way) that he is a voluntary Head, though he be an Head of influence, that flowes into every member, yet he is a voluntary Head, according to his own good pleasure, and the exigents of his members. Sometimes we have need of more grace, & then it flowes into us from him

him accordingly; sometimes we have need to know our weakness, and then he leaves us to our selves, that we may know, that without Him we cannot stand, that we may know the necessity of his guidance to Heaven in the sense of our imperfections, that we might see our weakness and corruptions, that we had thought we had not had in us. As *Moses* was tempted to murmur, a meek man: and *David* to cruelty, a milde man, that thought they had not had those corruptions in them. God leaves Christians sometimes to themselves, that they may know that they are not strong by their own spirit. So the degrees are from *Christ*, sometimes more, and sometimes lesse; sometimes we are in desertion, that we may know the manner of Christs governing us till we come to Heaven.

Numb. 11. 21
2 Sam. 11. 15.

Well, I beseech you let us know, that out of Christ there is no Grace: A civil man doth nothing in Religion well: there cannot be a Beame without the Sun: there cannot be a River without a Spring: there cannot be a good work, without the spring of good works, Christ: Therefore we should fetch all from him, since there is no grace out of him at all.

Vse.

Again, let us be sure in all particular actions, to be poor in spirit, when we have any temptation to resist, any trouble to beare, or any duty to do, let us empty our selves: *No grace is stronger than Humility: No man is weaker than a proud man*: For a proud man rests on nothing, and an humble man that empties himself, he stands upon the Rock. We should therefore make use of the strength of Christ, that hath not only abundance for himself, but an abundance for us, an overflowing for every Christian for his good. Let us empty our selves (as the Prophet saith to the Widow) bring empty Vessels now, and we shall have oyl enough. There is enough in Christ; but first we must empty our selves by humility, and then there is fulness in him; of his fulness we receive Grace for Grace: His fulness is like the fulness of the Clouds, that are ready to drop, and like the fulness of breasts, that are ready to yield what they have. He is willing, it is our fault, and baseness, and pride, that hinders us. Let us as much as we can, empty our selves of our selves, and stir up the Spirit of Faith; go to Christ; *so much faith as we carry, so much grace we receive from him*. If we do but touch him by Faith, the issue of our corruptions will be dryed up in some measure, and we shall have a spring of graces in us, answerable to the graces in him.

Vse 2.

I beseech you therefore, let us labour for these two graces (especially since all is out of us in the covenant of grace, not only salvation is out of us, but grace that brings us to Heaven is out of us) to empty our selves in humility, & by Faith to go to Christ. The one grace makes us go out of our selves; the other carries us to Christ, & to the promises of Christ. Learn to do this in every action; for we may be foyled in every particular action, for want of humility & faith; we must not trust to any grace, or any ability in us, but trust to our spring, go to Christ, when we have any thing to do. *What is the reason that Christians fail?* They think I had grace yesterday, & before, and hereupon they go not for supply of new strength to Christ. Know, that in every act, in every temptation, in every particular suffering, we need a particular new strength, and a greater

Jam. 1. 5.

The skill to
fetch strength
from Christ.

greater strength then we had before, if the Temptation be greater, if the Work be greater. As it is with a Porter, he cannot carry a new Burden, that is heavier than he did before, without a new strength, without more strength than he had before: So a Christian cannot bear a new affliction without new strength, without more strength. Therefore consider, what the nature of the business is that we are to do: and the strength of the temptation that we are to encounter with: and answerably go to Christ for a measure greater than we had before. He never upbraids us, nor casts us in the teeth (as *James* saith:) there is an Art, a skill of fetching strength from Christ to do all things (if wee would learn it:) as there is a skill to be a Christian; it is a Trade: So *there is a skill to fetch the strength that he hath from his Spring, from Christ.* Now that skill in a word is this:

I

First, to know our own want, and to know the necessity of grace, and the excellency of the state of holiness; that of all conditions, it is the best, and of all conditions, a sinful estate is the worst; this will make us go out of our selves to Christ. Well, *How shall we fetch strength from Christ then?* Consider wherefore Christ hath the Treasures of all in him, and go to him for particular graces we want whatsoever; when we know the excellency and necessity of it before, then make use of the vertue of his death and resurrection: Thus, Are we tempted to any sin? Make use of the death of Christ, of his great love, in giving himself, and then of the holiness of God in giving Christ to die for sin, he hates sin so: and then of the fruit of his death, that was to free and deliver us from sin. When we think of these things, did God & Christ so love me? Is it the holiness of God, and the holiness of Christ, that God became Man to die for me, and shall I go and trifle, and be tempted to sin, and offend so holy and so gracious a God, that hates sin so infinitely? These be strong reasons fetcht from Christ: We have from both the Reasons why we should do good, and why we should do evil: and we have the strength. There are two things requisite for a man to do a thing, as a man. The reason why he should do it, and strength to perform it, both these are from Christ.

2

As from Ill we are stopped by the consideration of Christs Death; So, *when we are moved to grace*, consider the vertue of Christs Resurrection: why is Christ now in Heaven in our nature? Is it not to fill his Church with his Spirit? Why doth he make intercession in Heaven? Is it not that we should not be discouraged, notwithstanding our daily infirmities? Shall we not make use of it? He is glorious for us, not for himself, but for his mystical body. As he hath made his Natural body glorious, so he will make his mystical body glorious, by little and little, he being therefore in Heaven, interceding with God. Go to him then in all thy wants and Reasons thus. Hath the Spirit of God raised him from the lowest, And shall not the same Spirit raise me from this weakness? Yes, the Spirit of God will raise me from the baseness of sin, to the beauty of holiness. The same Spirit that raised *Christs* body, wil quicken my dead heart. Fetch vertue and strength from Christ, on all occasions, and make use of him for every turn. Oh that we could learn these things, we should passe through every condition sweetly, and be able to live, and dye comfortably.

I

I beseech you consider what hath been spoken. Study Christ daily, not for redemption and reconciliation only (thought that chiefly) but study Christ to be all in all to us, to be our sanctification, to fit us for Heaven. Study the promises, loose no priviledge, God would not have fit them in the word but for our good.

Take heed of base despair, Oh I shall never overcome this sin, and that corruption. What shut the people of *Canaan*? It was base despair that lost them earthly *Canaan*, take heed it shut not you out of Heavenly *Canaan*. I shall not be able to overcome my lusts, I shall not be suffer, &c. No, why are the Promises made? and why is Christ Heaven? Shall we by despair and infidelity, loose Christ and the Promises, and all the comforts held out unto us, to betray our souls basely unto Satan? I beseech you weigh that necessity of these things. We know not what times God may call us unto, despair not beforehand, let fall what will, get into Christ, make sure thy right to him, and fear not strength to carry thee through all estates. He will stand by thee, and never leave thee. When did *Paul* speak these glorious words? In Prison, *I can do all things through Christ*. Did Christ desert *Paul* in trouble? Was it not better for *Paul* to have Grace, then be freed from affliction? Wicked men may be freed from trouble, only a Christian hath Grace to carry himself well in trouble. Come what will, If we be in Christ, either we shall be freed from troubles, or have grace comfortably to beare them. Either we have what we want, or *Contentment* without it: Is it not better to have Gods grace, then the thing we desire? Is it not better to have a Spirit of glory rest on us, then be left to the satisfaction of our own spirits? Could not God have freed *Paul* from Prison? Yes, but where had been the demonstration of a contented minde, and a heavenly Spirit then? Where had been the Example of a Christian, bearing the Crosse comfortably? *Paul* lost nothing, you see how many Starres shine in the Night of his affliction, what a lustre he had in his dark state of imprisonment. Shall we then fear any condition. No, get acquaintance with God, get understanding of Christ, with his Promises and Priviledges, and let the worst tryall befall us, we shall be safe.